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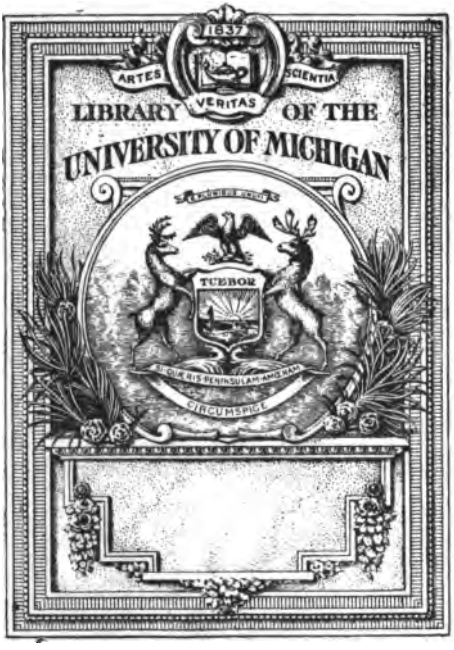
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CHICAGO

PIAZETTA at Venice, with Columns of the Lion and of St. Theodore. Island of San Giorgio in distance.

" I loved her from my boyhood — she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart." — Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xviii, p. 64.

With Byron in Italy

Being a Selection of the Poems and Letters of
LORD BYRON
Which have to do with his Life in Italy from
1816 to 1823

Selected and Arranged by
ANNA BENNESON MCMAHAN
Editor of "Florence in the Poetry of the Brownings,"
"With Shelley in Italy," etc.

With over Sixty Illustrations
from Photographs

Chicago
A. C. McCLURG & Co.
1906

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Published September 29, 1906

About two-thirds of the illustrations of this volume are from the photographs of Alinari Brothers, Florence. Many of the others have been furnished by friends interested in the places celebrated by Byron.

TO MY FRIENDS

A. J. C.

AND

E. E. K.

Thou Italy! whose ever golden fields,
Plough'd by the sunbeams solely, would suffice
For the world's granary: . . . .
Birthplace of heroes, sanctuary of saints,
Where earthly first, then heavenly glory made
Her home.

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE.

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Introduction

OF the four English poets whose lives are almost as closely associated with Italy as with England — Browning, Shelley, Byron, Landor — the one whose absorption into this land of their adoption is most obvious and most complete is Byron. Browning said, "Italy is my university"; Shelley declared that the inspiration of his greatest poem was due to the "vigorous awakening of Spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits"; Landor settled in Florence and said, "Italy is now my country"; but Byron more than any of the others became Italianized in habits and ideas, entered at once and completely into the associations, the history, the thoughts of the Italian people. He joined in their political intrigues, was head of one of their secret societies, hung out the tricolor flag from his own balcony, spoke and wrote the language fluently, was well versed in their great literature, planned to write his own masterpiece in Italian, and so often made Italy the subject of his work that it is hardly saying too much to declare that it was through Byron that Englishmen first became interested in Italy.

This is not to ignore that Chaucer had adapted or imitated Italian tales, that the Elizabethans had dramatized Italian novels, that Milton had followed the Italian manner

in his "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"; but these all stood more or less on the outside, while Byron often seems almost like an Italian writing in English. When he arrived in Italy (November, 1816) he was twenty-eight years old, and no man at twenty-eight had ever been more in the public eye. He had "awaked and found himself famous" for one poem, had sold in one day 10,000 copies of another, had been rated as the handsomest and berated as the wickedest man alive; he had the rank of lord and the expensive tastes of one, but so little money that his pockets were always empty and his house invaded by bailiffs; he had made a surprising marriage and a still more surprising separation within the space of less than thirteen months; he had been a rioter in his ancestral hall at Newstead Abbey, a dandy in London, an extensive traveller in Spain, Greece, and Asia Minor at a time when such journeys were extremely unusual; had written about these countries in verse which threw the world into raptures and which was translated into many languages; and at all times and in all places had attracted an attention greater than that bestowed on crowned kings or haloed saints. His contemporaries were baffled by this strange and contradictory personality; their criticism was staggered by the effort to appraise his work apart from the glamour of that personality.

But when the centenary of his birth came round (1888), the problem had changed its aspect and the question then was, Why was Byron ever so popular? In a generation which produced Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Scott, Landor, Keats, what has Byron to offer in comparison with even the least of these? Fortunately that question

does not concern us here. We have lived past the Day of Judgment set by Matthew Arnold, and found that neither his prophecy of Byron's supremacy nor Swinburne's equally sure prophecy of oblivion has befallen the poet. On the Continent, indeed, his reputation is as great as ever, while the eager welcome given to the new English and American editions of his poems proves that the twentieth century is ready to renew its acquaintance with a somewhat neglected Byron.

The last and most prolific period of Byron's literary composition was the eight years after leaving England, — all spent in Italy except the first few months in Switzerland and the last few months in Greece. Byron's love for Greece and his final devotion of time, purse, thoughts, and life itself to her liberation are well known. But his love for Italy, which was quite as intense, is less generally appreciated. The fourth canto of "Childe Harold" bears witness. Let those who will dismiss it as a "versified note-book"; nevertheless the Italy there pictured is the Italy that first fascinated the imagination of the English and American traveller.[1] Because we in this *blasé*-tourist age are somewhat aweary of it and can find plenty of flaws in it is no reason for denying its many magnificent passages, its sympathy with Italy's skies and lakes and seas and mountains, its penetration into her inmost spirit, and its lyrical power in such passages as the stanzas beginning

"O Rome, my country, city of the soul!"

[1] "It was the sight of the numerous English travellers following in the footsteps of 'Childe Harold' with Murray's handbook under their arms that suggested the first Bædeker." — HERR FRITZ BÆDEKER in *London Times*, 1889.

Italy's history on its romantic side nowhere, even among her own poets, finds more thrilling expression.

But in a yet deeper and more interior way did Byron's removal to Italy become an epoch-making event in his poetry and in his life. Immediately on his arrival he began to study the Italian writers, especially their writers of burlesque, such as Pulci, Casti, Berni, and Ariosto. His letters show how quickly he became charmed by Pulci, and afterwards when he translated two books of Pulci's "Morgante Maggiore" he repeatedly announced his conviction that this was the best work he had ever done. Soon he adopted the metre and spirit of this poet for an original work on a Venetian subject, calling it "Beppo: A Venetian Story." Other English writers — especially John Hookham Frere — had used the same octave stanzas and had tried the same mingling of grave and gay in the Tuscan humoristic style. But Byron's achievement had a richness of execution, a mastery over his material all its own. It is doubtful if he himself knew his own power for comedy previously; certain it is that afterwards he never abandoned it, and that in this metre and of this type are the "Don Juan" and the "Vision of Judgment," on which rests his most secure fame.

Time was when no self-respecting person would mention "Don Juan" in polite society. Even many who would quote feelingly

> "And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
> 'T is that I may not weep"

or

> "Perhaps the early grave
> Which men weep over was meant to save";

or who would sing "Ave Maria, blessed be the hour" or "The Isles of Greece" did it in entire innocence of their indebtedness to the unmentionable poem. It is true that there is a great deal in it that one would spare gladly, both from the point of view of morals and of poetic art; but it served as a repository for all Byron's thoughts and feelings during several years and was left unfinished with the sixteenth canto at the time of his death. It is often too sensual, like his own life; too bitter, with rage against wrongs suffered by himself; too vindictive, as self-ostracized he watched his countrymen from afar and lashed their cant, their hypocrisy, their senseless and cruel customs in politics and society. No wonder that it gave England much offence at the time and that it can never be recommended for "family reading." But the wit, the verve, the humor, the satire have established it as chief of English humorous epics; in its best parts one of the most quotable of poems, the whole is greater than any of its parts.

In this kind — the mock-heroic — Byron's place remains secure. But the mock-heroic, after all, makes too little appeal to the higher nature of mankind to hold an enduring place in their hearts. He became easily the "voice-in-chief" of his generation because his temperament was so congenial to the great passions then agitating the souls of men. He was the supreme incarnation of its romantic ideals, the poet of its revolutionary spirit. In these calmer days, when we turn rather to those poets who bring us thought, revelation of truth, moral and spiritual insight, Byron does not respond to our call. Some of his poetry is magnificent; it compels our admiration,

but not the love we feel toward those who give us that "breath and finer spirit of all knowledge" which it is the supreme mission of poetry to convey.

Beside being a great poet, Byron was a brilliant and captivating letter-writer. Saucy, vain, reckless, profligate as his letters sometimes are, the fire of his own love for freedom, of his intensity of purpose to goad the slave to rise up and claim his birthright, burns through them no less than through the poems. Whether as author writing to publisher, as man of the world to lawyer or business agent, as brother to a beloved sister, or as friend to friend, there is a dash and piquancy to them that rank Byron high among the great letter-writers of all time. They have little to say about Italian scenery or Italian art (the poems are descriptive, but not the letters), but they have much to say about the Italian people and their customs, and they show how intimately he knew them and how persistently (except in the case of a few old friends) he shunned his own countrymen.

Byron must have sat for his likeness a wearisome number of times, judging by the long array of his portraits in oil, in miniature, in pencil-sketch, beside two busts. Most of these have been reproduced in photogravure in the thirteen-volume Murray edition of the Poems and Letters. Among them, however, is not included that of the Italian painter Vincenzo Camuccini (1773–1844), now in the Accademia di San Luca at Rome, reproduced in the present volume as frontispiece to the concluding portion, — The Years 1822 and 1823. No search either among the annals of this painter or in the Byron correspondence

reveals the precise time at which he sat for this picture. But, to me, this more than any of the others communicates that fascination of look and expression of which we hear so much and corresponds to the descriptions of his contemporaries, — "small head, covered and fringed with brown curls," eyes "things of light and for light," nose "long and straight," "the sweep and shapely curves of chin and jaw." We feel that the artist who painted it was in sympathy with his subject, and that he has given us Byron as he looked while in the Italy that he loved and that loved him in return.

Byron had many a grievance against England, not the least of which was its habit of identifying his creations, — "Childe Harold," "Cain," "Manfred," "Don Juan," — with himself and his own life. Failing to understand him, his contemporaries substituted abuse and adoration in variously mingled proportions. Nor even now, when time has modified both of these feelings and when multitudes of critics from Macaulay to Paul E. More and Ernest Hartley Coleridge have essayed the task, can it be said that we have any adequate analysis of this most complex and puzzling character among the English poets. Until a psychologist equal to the occasion shall arise, the best means of arriving at an individual opinion may be to read side by side the poems and the letters during the most mature and most productive period of Byron's life, — the years of his Italian residence.

A. B. McM.

Rome, 1906.

THE YEARS 1817, 1818, 1819

" The church of St. Mark — which stands hard by
With fretted pinnacles on high,
And Cupola and minaret."

— Venice, p. 8.

WITH BYRON IN ITALY

THE YEARS 1817, 1818, 1819

VENICE

INTRODUCTORY

ARRIVING in Venice late in the year 1816, this city became at once to Byron the "fairy city of his heart." Her canals, her gondolas, her streets, her bridges, palaces, balconies, piazzas, carnivals, pictures, politics, history, — all appealed to his poetic imagination and reckless mood of the moment. The fragment "Venice" (p. 7) probably was the first poetic expression of his feelings, although it lay in manuscript nearly ninety years, to be published first in our own century.

In almost his first letter to his publisher, John Murray, he writes to ask that he will send him an English prose work called "View of Italy," for the sake of securing certain facts for his own poetical purposes. He has seen the black veil painted over the place where the picture of Marino Faliero should appear among the Doges, the Giant's Staircase, where he was crowned and discrowned and decapitated, but can find no good account in Venice of that Doge and

his conspiracy, or the motives for it. He has determined to write a tragedy having the fiery character and strange story of Faliero for its subject, — an undertaking requiring so much research, however, that it was four years before the work was completed. The story of another Doge, Francis Foscari, and his son Jacopo, also appealed to him, although the publication of "The Two Foscari" likewise was deferred some years. The indignant "Ode to Venice" shows how he took to heart her servile condition, while its spirited appeal at the close expresses — what is revealed also at other times and places — Byron's admiration of America and American liberty, —

> *"better be*
> *Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,*
> *In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,*
> *Than stagnate on our marsh — or, o'er the deep*
> *Fly, and one current to the ocean add,*
> *One spirit to the souls our fathers had,*
> *One freeman more, America, to thee!"*

A visit which Byron made to Rome in the spring of 1817, stopping at Foligno, Ferrara, and Florence on the way, resulted in several poems. Ferrara and Tasso's prison cell there inspired the fine "Lament of Tasso"; the Coliseum and the Palaces of the Cæsars at Rome suggested one of the choicest passages of the third act of "Manfred," which he had brought to Italy in an unfinished state; the fourth, last, and best canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," dealing with the feelings and thoughts of this rapid

journey, was thrown off at a white heat, a poem of one hundred and thirty stanzas, afterwards increased to one hundred and eighty-six, being written in thirty-three days immediately upon his return to Venice. "Beppo," Byron's first attempt in the mock-heroic style, of which mention already has been made; "Mazeppa," perhaps the best known of all his tales in verse, and the first four cantos of "Don Juan" also belong to the Venice period.

It is difficult to reconcile the tale of such a long and brilliant list of masterpieces, to say nothing of his study of the Armenian language, "in order to have something craggy to break his mind on," with the parallel tales reporting his depraved and sensual life at this time. But such unwilling witnesses as his guests, — Shelley, whose admiration of Byron's poetry was excessive, Thomas Moore, his enthusiastic biographer, Hobhouse, his life-long friend, — to say nothing of Byron's own letters from Venice, are not to be gainsaid. The French traveller, Henri Beyle, however, attributes Byron's reputation to English stupidity; and after going into raptures over his personal charms and into rage over the injustice done him, adds: "If at the age of twenty-eight, when he can already reproach himself with having written six volumes of the finest poetry, it had been possible thoroughly to know the world, he would have been aware that in the nineteenth century there is but one alternative, to be a blockhead *or a* monster. . . . *Were*

I in his place, I would pass myself off as dead, and commence a new life as Mr. Smith, a worthy merchant of Lima."

So long as Byron remained in England he had refused to accept any pay for his writings, feeling that his position as a lord and a gentleman would be compromised by the acceptance of money. But having once reconciled himself to a contrary position, he soon becomes quite a grasping man-of-business, and will take nothing less than the highest prices for his wares.

This decision is worth more than a passing mention, because for the first time in the history of English authorship a nobleman became brave enough to confess himself an author by profession. Authors of noble, even of royal rank, had written and published, but they had held themselves aloof from anything so sordid as money compensation. In England, Byron had given away his copyrights to impecunious friends, even while borrowing money for his own needs at extortionate terms from London usurers. In now deciding that he might and would accept the strong and steady stream of wealth pouring in from the sale of his works, and apply it to his own use in living according to his rank, he was acting in opposition to the prejudices of his order and to the sentiment of all English society. His long hesitation and pain preceding seem almost laughable now, but they serve to mark the great change of mental attitude in the

last hundred years. Murray's list of payments to the poet during the first five years of his Italian residence foots up to nearly $63,000. He spent, however, as royally as he earned, and in Italy, as later in Greece, a very large proportion of this amount was devoted to the cause of the liberty of the people.

VENICE

A FRAGMENT

'T is midnight — but it is not dark
Within thy spacious place, St. Mark!
The Lights within, the Lamps without,
Shine above the revel rout.
The brazen Steeds are glittering o'er
The holy building's massy door,
Glittering with their collars of gold,
The goodly work of the days of old —
And the wingèd Lion stern and solemn
Frowns from the height of his hoary column,
Facing the palace in which doth lodge
The ocean-city's dreaded Doge.
The palace is proud — but near it lies,
Divided by the 'Bridge of Sighs,'
The dreary dwelling where the State
Enchains the captives of their hate:
These — they perish or they pine;
But which their doom may none divine:
Many have pass'd that Arch of pain,
But none retraced their steps again.

It is a princely colonnade!
And wrought around a princely place,
When that vast edifice display'd
Looks with its venerable face
Over the far and subject sea,
Which makes the fearless isles so free!
And 't is a strange and noble pile,
Pillar'd into many an aisle:
Every pillar fair to see,
Marble — jasper — and porphyry —
The church of St. Mark — which stands hard by
With fretted pinnacles on high,
And cupola and minaret;
More like the mosque of orient lands,
Than the fanes wherein we pray,
And Mary's blessèd likeness stands.

VENICE, *December* 6, 1816.[1]

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, November 25, 1816.

DEAR SIR, — It is some months since I have heard from or of you — I think, not since I left Diodati. From Milan I wrote once or twice; but have been here some little time, and intend to pass the winter without removing. I was much pleased with the Lago di Garda, and with Verona, particularly the amphitheatre, and a sarcophagus in a Convent garden, which they show as Juliet's: they insist on

[1] First published in 1901, from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray, grandson of Byron's publisher.

JULIET'S Tomb at Verona.

"I was much pleased with Verona . . . and a sarcophagus in a Convent garden, which they show as Juliet's: they insist on the truth of her history."

—See Letter to John Murray, p. 8.

the *truth* of her history. Since my arrival at Venice, the lady of the Austrian governor told me that between Verona and Vicenza there are still ruins of the castle of the *Montecchi*, and a chapel once appertaining to the Capulets. Romeo seems to have been of *Vicenza* by the tradition; but I was a good deal surprised to find so firm a faith in Bandello's novel, which seems really to have been founded on a fact.

Venice pleases me as much as I expected, and I expected much. It is one of those places which I know before I see them, and has always haunted me the most after the East. I like the gloomy gaiety of their gondolas, and the silence of their canals. I do not even dislike the evident decay of the city, though I regret the singularity of its vanished costume; however, there is much left still; the Carnival, too, is coming.

St. Mark's, and indeed Venice, is most alive at night. The theatres are not open till *nine*, and the society is proportionably late. All this is to my taste; but most of your countrymen miss and regret the rattle of hackney coaches, without which they can't sleep.

I have got remarkably good apartments in a private house: I see something of the inhabitants (having had a good many letters to some of them): I have got my gondola; I read a little, and luckily could speak Italian (more fluently though than accurately) long ago. I am studying, out of curiosity, the *Venetian* dialect, which is very naive, and soft, and peculiar, though not at all classical; I go out frequently, and am in very good contentment.

The *Helen* of Canova (a bust which is in the house of

Madame the Countess d' Albrizzi, whom I know) is, without exception, to my mind, the most perfectly beautiful of human conceptions, and far beyond my ideas of human execution.

In this beloved marble view
  Above the works and thoughts of Man,
What Nature *could*, but *would not*, do,
  And Beauty and Canova *can!*
Beyond Imagination's power,
  Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With Immortality her dower,
  Behold the *Helen* of the *heart!*

. . . . . .

The general race of women appear to be handsome; but in Italy, as on almost all the Continent, the highest orders are by no means a well-looking generation, and indeed reckoned by their countrymen very much otherwise. Some are exceptions, but most of them as ugly as Virtue herself.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, February 15, 1817.

. . . . . .

I have been uneasy because Mr. Hobhouse told me that his letter or preface[1] was to be addressed to *me*. Now, he and I are friends of many years; I have many obligations to him, and he none to me which have not been cancelled and more than repaid; but Mr. G[ifford] and I are friends also, and he has moreover been literarily so, through thick

[1] "Letters written by an Englishman resident at Paris during the last reign of Napoleon," by John Hobhouse.

and thin, in despite of difference of years, morals, habits, and even *politics*, which last would, I believe, if they were in heaven, divide the Trinity; and therefore I feel in a very awkward situation between the two, Mr. G. and my friend H., and can only wish that they had no differences, or that such as they have were accommodated. The answer I have not seen, for — it is odd enough for people so intimate — but Mr. H. and I are very sparing of our literary confidences. For example, the other day he wished to have a MS. of the 3d canto to read over to his brother, etc., which was refused; — and I have never seen his journals, nor he mine — (I only kept the short one of the mountains for my sister) — nor do I think that hardly ever he or I saw any of our own productions previous to their publication.

The article in the *E[dinburgh] R[eview]* on Coleridge I have not seen; but whether I am attacked in it or not, or in any other of the same journal, I shall never think ill of Mr. Jeffrey on that account, nor forget that his conduct towards me has been certainly most handsome during the last four or more years.

I forgot to mention to you that a kind of Poem [1] in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama, from which "The Incantation" [2] is an extract, begun last summer in Switzerland, is finished; it is in three acts; but of a very wild, metaphysical, and inexplicable kind. Almost all the persons — but two or three — are spirits of the earth and air, or

[1] "Manfred."

[2] The "Incantation" had been published with "The Prisoner of Chillon" the year previous.

the waters; the scene is in the Alps; the hero a kind of magician, who is tormented by a species of remorse, the cause of which is left half unexplained. He wanders about invoking these spirits, which appear to him, and are of no use; he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil Principle *in propriâ personâ*, to evocate a ghost, which appears, and gives him an ambiguous and disagreeable answer; and in the 3d act he is found by his attendants dying in a tower where he studied his art. You may perceive by this outline that I have no great opinion of this piece of phantasy: but I have at least rendered it *quite impossible* for the stage, for which my intercourse with D[rury] Lane has given me the greatest contempt.

I have not even copied it off, and feel too lazy at present to attempt the whole; but when I have, I will send it you, and you may either throw it into the fire or not.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, February 25, 1817.

. . . . . .

P. S. — Remember me to Mr. G[iffor]d. I have not received your parcel or parcels. Look into Moore's (Dr. Moore's) *View of Italy* for me; in one of the volumes you will find an account of the *Doge Valiere* (it ought to be Falieri) and his conspiracy, or the motives of it. Get it transcribed for me, and send it in a letter to me soon. I want it, and cannot find so good an account of that business here; though the veiled portrait, and the place where he was once crowned, and afterwards decapitated, still exist and are shown. I have searched all their

histories; but the policy of the old Aristocracy made their writers silent on his motives, which were a private grievance against one of the Patricians.

I mean to write a tragedy upon the subject, which appears to me very dramatic; an old man, jealous, and conspiring against the state of which he was the actually reigning Chief. The last circumstance makes it the most remarkable and only fact of the kind in all history of all nations.

TO THOMAS MOORE

VENICE, February 28, 1817.

. . . . . .

And this is your month of going to press — by the body of Diana! (a Venetian oath), I feel as anxious — but not fearful for you — as if it were myself coming out in a work of humour, which would, you know, be the antipodes of all my previous publications. I don't think you have anything to dread but your own reputation. You must keep up to that. As you never showed me a line of your work, I do not even know your measure; but you must send me a copy by Murray forthwith, and then you shall hear what I think. I dare say you are in a pucker. Of all authors, you are the only really *modest* one I ever met with, — which would sound oddly enough to those who recollect your morals when you were young — that is, when you were *extremely* young — I don't mean to stigmatise you either with years or morality.

I believe I told you that the *E[dinburgh] R[eview]*

had attacked me, in an article on Coleridge (I have not seen it) — "*Et tu*, Jeffrey?" — "there is nothing but roguery in villanous man." But I absolve him of all attacks, present and future; for I think he had already pushed his clemency in my behoof to the utmost, and I shall always think well of him. I only wonder he did not begin before, as my domestic destruction was a fine opening for all the world, of which all who could did well to avail themselves.

If I live ten years longer, you will see, however, that it is not over with me — I don't mean in literature, for that is nothing; and it may seem odd enough to say, I do not think it my vocation. But you will see that I shall do something or other — the times and fortune permitting — that, "like the cosmogony, or creation of the world, will puzzle the philosophers of all ages." But I doubt whether my constitution will hold out. I have, at intervals, exercised it most devilishly.

TO THOMAS MOORE

VENICE, March 25, 1817.

. . . . . .

I have not the least idea where I am going, nor what I am to do. I wished to have gone to Rome; but at present it is pestilent with English, — a parcel of staring boobies, who go about gaping and wishing to be at once cheap and magnificent. A man is a fool who travels now in France or Italy, till this tribe of wretches is swept home again. In two or three years the first rush will be over, and the Continent will be roomy and agreeable.

I stayed at Venice chiefly because it is not one of their "dens of thieves"; and here they but pause and pass. In Switzerland it was really noxious. Luckily, I was early, and had got the prettiest place on all the Lake before they were quickened into motion with the rest of the reptiles. But they crossed me everywhere. I met a family of children and old women half-way up the Wengen Alp (by the Jungfrau) upon mules, some of them too old and others too young to be the least aware of what they saw.

By the way, I think the Jungfrau, and all that region of Alps, which I traversed in September — going to the very top of the Wengen, which is not the highest (the Jungfrau itself is inaccessible) but the best point of view — much finer than Mont-Blanc and Chamouni, or the Simplon. I kept a journal of the whole for my sister Augusta, part of which she copied and let Murray see.

I wrote a sort of mad Drama, for the sake of introducing the Alpine scenery in description: and this I sent lately to Murray. Almost all the *dram. pers.* are spirits, ghosts, or magicians, and the scene is in the Alps and the other world, so you may suppose what a Bedlam tragedy it must be: make him show it you. I sent him all three acts piecemeal, by the post, and suppose they have arrived.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, March 25, 1817.

DEAR SIR, — Your letter and enclosure are safe; but "English gentlemen" are very rare — at least in Venice.

I doubt whether there are at present any, save the Consul[1] and vice-Consul, with neither of whom I have the slightest acquaintance. The moment I can pounce upon a witness, I will send the deed properly signed: but must he necessarily be genteel? Would not a servant or a merchant do? Venice is not a place where the English are gregarious; their pigeon-houses are Florence, Naples, Rome, etc.; and to tell you the truth, this was one reason why I staid here — till the season of the purgation of Rome from these people — which is infested with them at this time — should arrive. Besides, I abhor the nation, and the nation me; it is impossible for me to describe my *own* sensation on that point, but it may suffice to say, that, if I met with any of the race in the beautiful parts of Switzerland, the most distant glimpse or aspect of them poisoned the whole scene, and I do not choose to have the Pantheon, and St. Peter's, and the Capitol, spoiled for me too. This feeling may be probably owing to recent events, and the destruction with which my moral Clytemnestra[2] hewed me down; but it does not exist the less, and while it exists, I shall conceal it as little as any other. . . .

Some weeks ago I wrote to you my acknowledgments of W[alter] S[cott]'s article. Now I know it to be his, it cannot add to my good opinion of him, but it adds to that of myself. *He*, and Gifford, and Moore, are the only *regulars* I ever knew who had nothing of the *Garrison* about their manner: no nonsense, nor affectations, look

[1] Byron afterwards became intimate with this consul, Richard Hoppner, and used to read to him his poems in manuscript.

[2] Lady Byron, the wife from whom he had separated shortly before leaving England.

you! As for the rest whom I have known, there was always more or less of the author about them — the pen peeping from behind the ear, and the thumbs a little inky, or so.

. . . . . .

With regard to the "witch drama," I sent all the three acts by post, week after week, within this last month. I repeat that I have not an idea if it is good or bad. If bad, it must, on no account, be risked in publication; if good, it is at your service. I value it at *three hundred* guineas, or less, if you like it. Perhaps, if published, the best way will be to add it to your winter volume, and not publish separately. The price will show you I don't pique myself upon it; so speak out. You may put it in the fire, if you like, and Gifford[1] *don't* like.

TO THOMAS MOORE

VENICE, April 11, 1817.

. . . . . .

I hear nothing — know nothing. You may easily suppose that the English don't seek me, and I avoid them. To be sure, there are but few or none here, save passengers. Florence and Naples are their Margate and Ramsgate, and much the same sort of company too, by all accounts, — which hurts us among the Italians.

I want to hear of *Lalla Rookh* — are you out? Death and fiends! why don't you tell me where you are, what you are, and how you are? I shall go to Bologna by

[1] Gifford, editor of *Quarterly Review*, was the "reader" to whom Murray submitted Byron's manuscripts.

Ferrara, instead of Mantua: because I would rather see the cell where they caged Tasso,[1] and where he became mad and . . . , than his own MSS. at Modena, or the Mantuan birthplace of that harmonious plagiary and miserable flatterer,[2] whose cursed hexameters were drilled into me at Harrow. I saw Verona and Vicenza on my way here — Padua too.

I go *alone,* — but *alone,* because I mean to return here. I only want to see Rome. I have not the least curiosity about Florence, though I must see it for the sake of the Venus, etc., etc.; and I wish also to see the Fall of Terni. I think to return to Venice by Ravenna and Rimini, of both of which I mean to take notes for Leigh Hunt, who will be glad to hear of the scenery of his Poem.[3] There was a devil of a review of him in the *Quarterly* a year ago, which he answered. All answers are imprudent: but, to be sure, poetical flesh and blood must have the last word — that 's certain. I thought, and think, very highly of his Poem; but I warned him of the row his favourite antique phraseology would bring him into.

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

At Ferrara in the Library, are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's *Gerusalemme* and of Guarini's *Pastor Fido,* with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto;

[1] Tasso [1544–1595] was imprisoned by Alfonso II. as a lunatic in the Hospital of Sant' Anna at Ferrara, from March, 1579, to July, 1586.

[2] Compare "Childe Harold," IV, stanza lxxv.

[3] "The Story of Rimini."

TOMB of Torquato Tasso, in Convent of S. Onofrio, Rome. Statue by De Fabris.

"Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 't was his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xxxix, p. 69.

and the inkstand and chair, the tomb and the house of the latter. But, as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto — at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed, and depopulated: the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

I

Long years! — It tries the thrilling frame to bear,
And eagle-spirit of a Child of Song,
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude,
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorrèd grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain.
And bare, at once, Captivity display'd
Stands scoffing through the never-open'd gate,
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day,
And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,

Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and — it may be — my grave.[1]
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revell'd among men and things divine,
And pour'd my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for Him,
The God who was on earth and is in heaven,
For he hath strengthen'd me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven,
I have employ'd my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won, and how adored.

II

But this is o'er, my pleasant task is done:[2] —
My long-sustaining friend of many years!
If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But thou, my young creation! my soul's child!
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And woo'd me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone — and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.

[1] Tasso was released after seven years of imprisonment.
[2] The writing of "Jerusalem Delivered."

Thou too art ended — what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear — and how?
I know not that — but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they call'd me mad — and why?
Oh Leonora! wilt not *thou* reply?[1]
I was indeed delirious in my heart
To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind;
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;
But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still;
Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful, 't is their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III

Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark! the lash and the increasing howl,

[1] Leonora d'Este, sister of Alfonso, by whom Tasso was imprisoned. The belief that his punishment was because of love for the Princess Leonora is no longer accepted.

And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,
Some who do still goad on the o'er-labour'd mind,
And dim the little light that 's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill.
With these and with their victims am I class'd,
'Mid sounds and sights like these long years have pass'd;
'Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close:
So let it be, for then I shall repose.

IV

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives — Oh! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot!
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast lazar-house of many woes?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor e'en men mankind;
Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell —
For we are crowded in our solitudes —
Many, but each divided by the wall
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods;
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call —
None! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?

Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?
Would I not pay them back these pangs again,
And teach them inward Sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress
Which undermines our Stoical success?
No! still too proud to be vindictive, I
Have pardon'd princes' insults and would die.
Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where *thou* art a guest;
Thy brother hates — but I can not detest;
Thou pitiest not — but I can not forsake.

V

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquench'd is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart
As dwells the gather'd lightning in its cloud,
Encompass'd with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck, — forth flies the all-ethereal dart!
And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me; — they are gone — I am the same.
And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A princess was no love-mate for a bard;

I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes reveal'd it, they, alas!
Were punish'd by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipp'd at holy distance, and around
Hallow'd and meekly kiss'd the saintly ground;
Not for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Hath robed thee with a glory, and array'd
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismay'd —
Oh! not dismay'd — but awed, like One above;
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass —
I know not how — thy genius master'd mine —
My star stood still before thee: — if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design,
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell which wrongs me — but for *thee.*
The very love which lock'd me to my chain
Hath lighten'd half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI

It is no marvel; from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth.

TREE known as "Tasso's Oak" on Janiculum Hill, Rome. St. Peter's in the distance.

"I loved all Solitude; but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence."

— Lament of Tasso, p. 25.

Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering; and the Wise
Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe,
And that the only lesson was a blow; —
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Return'd and wept alone, and dream'd again
The visions which arise without a sleep.
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain;
And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought — and that was thee.
And then I lost my being all to be
Absorb'd in thine; the world was past away,
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII

I loved all Solitude; but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant. Had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave, —

But who hath seen me writhe or heard me rave?
Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wreck'd sailor on his desert shore;
The world is all before him — *mine* is *here*,
Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.
What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky —
I will not raise my own in such reproof,
Although 't is clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay: — I see
Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
And a strange demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below
The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffer'd so,
Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that may be borne, or can debase.
I thought mine enemies had been but Man,
But Spirits may be leagued with them — all Earth
Abandons, Heaven forgets me; in the dearth
Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
It may be, tempt me further, and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved
Like steel in tempering fire? because I loved?
Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal and than me.

IX

I once was quick in feeling — that is o'er;
My scars are callous, or I should have dash'd
My brain against these bars, as the sun flash'd
In mockery through them. If I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words, 't is that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamped Madness deep into my memory,
And woo Compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No — it shall be immortal! and I make
A future temple of my present cell,
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls, —
A poet's wreath shall be thine only crown,
A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy unpeopled walls!
And thou, Leonora! thou — who wert ashamed
That such as I could love, who blush'd to hear
To less than monarchs that thou couldst be dear —
Go! tell thy brother, that my heart, untamed
By grief, years, weariness — and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me —
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss,

Adores thee still; — and add, that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours
Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,
This — this shall be a consecrated spot!
But Thou — when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct — shalt have
One half the laurel which o'ershades my grave.
No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever — but too late!

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, April 14, 1817.

. . . . . .

To-day, or rather yesterday, for it is past midnight, I have been up to the battlements of the highest tower in Venice, and seen it and its view, in all the glory of a clear Italian sky. I also went over the Manfrini Palace, famous for its pictures. Amongst them, there is a portrait of *Ariosto* by *Titian*, surpassing all my anticipation of the power of painting or human expression: it is the poetry of portrait, and the portrait of poetry. There was also one of some learned lady, centuries old, whose name I forget, but whose features must always be remembered. I never saw greater beauty, or sweetness, or wisdom: — it is the kind of face to go mad for, because it cannot walk out of its frame. There is also a famous dead Christ and live apostles, for which Buonaparte offered in vain five thousand

"THE THREE FATES" — formerly attributed to Michel Angelo. In the Pitti Gallery, Florence.

— See Letter to John Murray, p. 32.

louis; and of which, though it is a *capo d' opera* of Titian, as I am no connoisseur, I say little, and thought less, except of one figure in it. There are ten thousand others, and some very fine Giorgiones amongst them, etc., etc. There is an original Laura and Petrarch, very hideous both. Petrarch has not only the dress, but the features and air of an old woman, and Laura looks by no means like a young one, or a pretty one. What struck me most in the general collection was the extreme resemblance of the style of the female faces in the mass of pictures, so many centuries or generations old, to those you see and meet every day amongst the existing Italians. The queen of Cyprus[1] and Giorgione's wife,[2] particularly the latter, are Venetians as it were of yesterday; the same eyes and expression, — and, to my mind, there is none finer.

You must recollect, however, that I know nothing of painting; and that I detest it, unless it reminds me of something I have seen, or think it possible to see, for which [reason] I spit upon and abhor all the Saints and subjects of one-half the impostures I see in the churches and palaces; and when in Flanders, I never was so disgusted in my life as with Rubens and his eternal wives and infernal glare of colours, as they appeared to me; and in Spain I did not think much of Murillo and Velasquez. Depend upon it, of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is the most imposed upon. I never yet saw the picture —

[1] Catharine Cornaro, on whose abdication, in 1489, the island of Cyprus was acquired by Venice.

[2] An error: Giorgione was unmarried.

or the statue — which came within a league of my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and seas, and rivers, and views, and two or three women, who went as far beyond it, — besides some horses; and a lion (at Veli Pasha's) in the Morea; and a tiger at supper in Exeter 'Change.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, April 14, 1817.

. . . . . .

The third act[1] is certainly damned bad, and, like the Archbishop of Grenada's homily (which savoured of the palsy), has the dregs of my fever, during which it was written. It must on *no account* be published in its present state. I will try and reform it, or rewrite it altogether; but the impulse is gone, and I have no chance of making anything out of it. I would not have it published as it is on any account. The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this act I thought good myself; the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be, and I wonder what the devil possessed me.

I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr. Gifford's opinion without *deduction*.[2] Do you suppose me such a Sotheby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that in fact I was not, and am not, convinced and convicted in my conscience of this same overt act of nonsense?

I shall try at it again: in the meantime, lay it upon the

[1] "Manfred."

[2] Murray sent Byron Gifford's objections to act iii of "Manfred," which, Murray says, "he does not by any means like."

shelf (the whole drama, I mean): but pray correct your copies of the first and second acts by the original MS.

I am not coming to England; but going to Rome in a few days.[1] I return to Venice in *June:* so, pray, address all letters, etc., to me *here*, as usual, — that is, to *Venice*. Dr. Polidori this day left this city with Lord Guilford for England. He is charged with some books to your care (from me), and two miniatures also to the same address, *both* for my sister.

Recollect *not* to publish, upon pain of I know not what, until I have tried again at the third act. I am not sure that I *shall* try, and still less that I shall succeed, if I do; but I am very sure, that (as it is) it is unfit for publication or perusal; and unless I can make it out to my own satisfaction, I won't have any part published.

TO JOHN MURRAY

FOLIGNO, April 26, 1817.

. . . . . .

At Florence I remained but a day, having a hurry for Rome, to which I am thus far advanced. However, I went to the two galleries, from which one returns drunk with beauty. The Venus[2] is more for admiration than love; but there are sculpture and painting, which for the first time at all gave me an idea of what people mean by their *cant*, and what Mr. Braham calls "entusimusy" (*i. e.*

[1] Byron left Venice soon after the middle of April, passing through Ferrara, Florence, and Foligno, on his way to Rome. He returned to Venice towards the end of May.

[2] Venus dei Medici.

enthusiasm) about those two most artificial of the arts. What struck me most were, the mistress of Raphael, a portrait; the mistress of Titian, a portrait; a Venus of Titian in the Medici gallery — *the* Venus; Canova's Venus also in the other gallery: Titian's mistress is also in the other gallery (that is, in the Pitti Palace gallery); the Parcæ of Michael Angelo, a picture; and the Antinous — the Alexander — and one or two not very decent groups in marble; the Genius of Death, a sleeping figure, etc., etc.

I also went to the Medici chapel[1] — fine frippery in great slabs of various expensive stones, to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcases. It is unfinished, and will remain so.

The church of "Santa Croce" contains much illustrious nothing. The tombs of Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Galileo Galilei, and Alfieri, make it the Westminster Abbey of Italy. I did not admire *any* of these tombs — beyond their contents. That of Alfieri is heavy, and all of them seem to me overloaded. What is necessary but a bust and name? and perhaps a date? — the last for the unchronological, of whom I am one. But all your allegory and eulogy is infernal, and worse than the long wigs of English numskulls upon Roman bodies in the statuary of the reigns of Charles, William, and Anne.

TO JOHN MURRAY

ROME, May 5, 1817.

DEAR SIR, — By this post (or next at farthest) I send you, in two *other* covers, the new third act of *Manfred*. I

[1] See "Childe Harold," IV, stanza lx.

CHAPEL of the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence. Mausoleum of the Medici Family.

"What is her pyramid of precious stones,
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes?" — Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lx, p. 74.

have rewritten the greater part, and returned what is not altered in the *proof* you sent me. The Abbot is become a good man, and the spirits are brought in at the death. You will find, I think, some good poetry in this new act, here and there; and if so, print it, without sending me further proofs, *under Mr. Gifford's correction,* if he will have the goodness to overlook it. Address all answers to *Venice,* as usual; I mean to return there in ten days.

The Lament of Tasso, which I sent from Florence, has, I trust, arrived: I look upon it as a "these be good rhymes," as Pope's papa said to him when he was a boy.[1] For the *two* — *it* and the Drama — you will disburse to me (*via* Kinnaird) *six* hundred guineas. You will perhaps be surprised that I set the same price upon this as upon the Drama; but, besides that I look upon it as *good,* I won't take less than three hundred guineas for anything. The two together will make *you* a larger publication than the *Siege* and *Parisina;* so you may think yourself let off very easy; that is to say, if these poems are good for anything, which I hope and believe.

I have been some days in Rome the Wonderful. I am seeing sights, and have done nothing else, except the new third act for you. I have this morning seen a live pope and a dead cardinal; Pius VII has been burying Cardinal Bracchi, whose body I saw in state at the Chiesa Nuova. Rome has delighted me beyond everything, since Athens

[1] "His primary and principal purpose," says Johnson, in his "Life of Pope" (*Lives of the Poets*), "was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say, 'These be good rhymes.'"

and Constantinople. But I shall not remain long this visit. Address to Venice.

Ever yours,

B^N.

P. S. — I have got my saddle-horses here, and have ridden, and am riding, all about the country.

FROM "MANFRED."

ACT III. SCENE II — A CHAMBER *in the* CASTLE OF MANFRED. MANFRED *and* HERMAN.

Her.

My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks beyond the mountain.

Man.

Doth he so?
I will look on him.

[MANFRED *advances to the Window of the Hall.*

Glorious Orb! the idol
Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons [1]
Of the embrace of angels with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return; —
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!

[1] See *Genesis* vi. 2, 4.

Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown,
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,
Even as our outward aspects; — thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone;
I follow. [*Exit* MANFRED

SCENE III — THE MOUNTAINS. — THE CASTLE OF MANFRED *at some distance.* — A TERRACE *before a* TOWER. — TIME, *twilight.*

HERMAN, MANUEL, *and other Dependants of* MANFRED.

Her.

'T is strange enough; night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,

Without a witness. I have been within it, —
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel.

'T were dangerous;
Content thyself with what thou know'st already.

Her.

Ah, Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle —
How many years is 't?

Manuel.

Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

Her.

There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ?

Manuel.

I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free —
A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not

With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Her.

Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

Manuel.

These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her.

Come, be friendly;
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I 've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happen'd hereabouts, by this same tower.

Manuel.

That was a night indeed! I do remember
'T was twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening; yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then, —
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon.

Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower, —
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings — her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love, —
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The Lady Astarte, his —

Hush! who comes here?

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot.

Where is your master?

Her.

Yonder in the tower.

Abbot.

I must speak with him.

Manuel.

'T is impossible;
He is most private and must not be thus
Intruded on.

Abbot.

Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be —
But I must see him.

Her.

Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.

Abbot.

Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprise the Count of my approach.

Her.

We dare not.

Abbot.

Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

Manuel.

Reverend father, stop —
I pray you pause.

Abbot.

Why so?

Manuel.

But step this way,
And I will tell you further.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — INTERIOR OF THE TOWER. MANFRED *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,

When I was wandering, — upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth; —
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers and the Augustan halls
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 't were anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er

THE Coliseum at Rome.

" The gladiators' bloody circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!"
— Manfred, Act III, Scene IV, p 40.

With silent worship of the great of old, —
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns. —[1]

'T was such a night!

'T is strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot.

My good lord!
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head — could I say *heart* —
Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wander'd
But is not yet all lost.

Man.

Thou know'st me not;
My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded:
Retire, or 't will be dangerous — away!

Abbot.

Thou dost not mean to menace me?

[1] "Drove at midnight to see the Coliseum by moonlight; but what can I say of the Coliseum? . . . To describe it I should have thought impossible if I had not read 'Manfred.' . . . Byron's description is the very thing itself." — Mathews' "Diary of an Invalid."

Man.

Not I;
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.

Abbot.

What dost thou mean?

Man.

Look there!
What dost thou see?

Abbot.

Nothing.

Man.

Look there, I say,
And steadfastly; — now tell me what thou seest.

Abbot.

That which should shake me — but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between
Thyself and me — but I do fear him not.

Man.

Thou hast no cause; he shall not harm thee, but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.
I say to thee — Retire!

Abbot.

And I reply,
Never — till I have battled with this fiend: —
What doth he here?

Man.

Why — ay — what doth he here?
I did not send for him, — he is unbidden.

Abbot.

Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell —
Avaunt! —

Man.

Pronounce — what is thy mission?

Spirit.

Come!

Abbot.

What art thou, unknown being? answer! — speak!

Spirit.

The genius of this mortal. — Come! 't is time.

Man.

I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

Spirit.

Thou 'lt know anon — Come! Come!

Man.

I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

Spirit.

Mortal! thine hour is come — Away! I say.

Man.

I knew, and know my hour is come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I 'll die as I have lived — alone.

Spirit.

Then I must summon up my brethren. — Rise!

[*Other Spirits rise up.*

Abbot.

Avaunt! ye evil ones! — Avaunt! I say, —
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name —

Spirit.

Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him — Away! away!

Man.

I do defy ye — though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye — earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

Spirit.

Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal? — Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

Man.

Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour, — *that* I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour.
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science, penance, daring,
And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill
In knowledge of our fathers when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
Upon my strength — I do defy — deny —
Spurn back, and scorn ye! —

Spirit.

But thy many crimes
Have made thee —

Man.

What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals? — Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine.
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,
Is its own origin of ill and end,
And its own place and time; its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. — Back, ye baffled fiends!
The hand of death is on me — but not yours!

[*The Demons disappear.*

Abbot.

Alas! how pale thou art — thy lips are white —
And thy breast heaves — and in thy gasping throat

The accents rattle. Give thy prayers to Heaven —
Pray — albeit but in thought, — but die not thus.

Man.

'T is over — my dull eyes can fix thee not:
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well —
Give me thy hand.

Abbot.

Cold — cold — even to the heart —
But yet one prayer — Alas! how fares it with thee?

Man.

Old man! 't is not so difficult to die.

[MANFRED *expires.*

Abbot.

He 's gone, his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight;
Whither? I dread to think; but he is gone.

TO JOHN MURRAY

ROME, May 9, 1817.

. . . . . .

I am delighted with Rome — as I would be with a bandbox, that is, it is a fine thing to see, finer than Greece; but I have not been here long enough to affect it as a residence, and I must go back to Lombardy, because I am wretched at being away from M[ariann]a. I have been riding my saddle-horses every day, and been to Albano, its lakes, and to the top of the Alban Mount, and

to Frascati, Aricia, etc., etc., with an etc., etc., etc., about the city, and in the city: for all which — *vide* Guide-book. As a *whole, ancient* and *modern*, it beats Greece, Constantinople, everything — at least that I have ever seen. But I can't describe, because my first impressions are always strong and confused, and my Memory *selects* and reduces them to order, like distance in the landscape, and blends them better, although they may be less distinct. There must be a sense or two more than we have, as mortals, which I suppose the Devil has (or t'other); for where there is much to be grasped we are always at a loss, and yet feel that we ought to have a higher and more extended comprehension.

I have had a letter from Moore, who is in some alarm about his poem. I don't see why.

I have had another from my poor dear Augusta,[1] who is in a sad fuss about my late illness; do, pray, tell her (the truth) that I am better than ever, and in importunate health, growing (if not grown) large and ruddy, and congratulated by impertinent persons on my robustious appearance, when I ought to be pale and interesting. . . .

I have no thoughts of coming amongst you yet awhile, so that I can fight off business. If I could but make a tolerable sale of Newstead, there would be no occasion for my return; and I can assure you very sincerely, that I am much happier (or, at least, have been so) out of your island than in it.

Yours ever truly,

B.

[1] Lady Augusta Leigh, Byron's sister.

OLD Amphitheatre of Tusculum, near Frascati.
Alban Mount at right in distance.

"I have been riding my saddle-horses every day, and been to Albano, its lakes, and to the top of the Alban Mount, to Frascati, . . . As a whole, ancient and modern, it beats Greece, Constantinople, everything."

— See Letter to John Murray, p. 47.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, June 4, 1817.

. . . . . .

I was delighted with Rome, and was on horseback all round it many hours daily, besides in it the rest of my time, bothering over its marvels. I excursed and skirred the country round to Alba, Tivoli, Frascati, Licenza, etc., etc.; besides, I visited twice the Fall of Terni, which beats everything.[1] On my way back, close to the temple by its banks, I got some famous trout out of the river Clitumnus — the prettiest little stream in all poesy,[2] near the first post from Foligno and Spoleto. I did not stay at Florence, being anxious to get home to Venice, and having already seen the galleries and other sights. I left my commendatory letters the evening before I went, so I saw nobody.

To-day, Pindemonte,[3] the celebrated poet of Verona, called on me; he is a little thin man, with acute and pleasing features; his address good and gentle; his appearance altogether very philosophical; his age about sixty, or more. He is one of their best going. I gave him *Forsyth*,[4] as he speaks, or reads rather, a little English, and will find there a favourable account of himself. He enquired after his

[1] "Childe Harold," Canto IV, stanza lxxi.

[2] Compare "Childe Harold," Canto IV, stanza lxvi.

[3] Ippolito Pindemonte (1753–1828), born at Verona, translated into blank verse the Odyssey, the Georgics, and passages from Ovid and Catullus. He also wrote a classic tragedy, "Arminio," and published several volumes of poetry.

[4] "Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy in 1802 and 1803," by Joseph Forsyth.

old Cruscan friends, Parsons, Greathead, Mrs. Piozzi, and Merry, all of whom he had known in his youth. I gave him as bad an account of them as I could, answering, as the false "Solomon Lob" does to "Totterton" in the farce,[1] that they were "all gone dead," and damned by a satire more than twenty years ago; that the name of their extinguisher was Gifford; that they were but a sad set of scribes after all, and no great things in any other way. He seemed, as was natural, very much pleased with this account of his old acquaintances, and went away greatly gratified with that and Mr. Forsyth's sententious paragraph of applause in his own (Pindemonte's) favour. After having been a little libertine in his youth, he is grown devout, and takes prayers, and talks to himself, to keep off the Devil; but for all that, he is a very nice little old gentleman.

I forgot to tell you that at Bologna (which is celebrated for producing popes, painters, and sausages) I saw an anatomical gallery, where there is a deal of waxwork, in which . . .

I am sorry to hear of your row with Hunt[2]: but suppose him to be exasperated by the *Quarterly* and your refusal to *deal;* and when one is angry and edits a paper I should think the temptation too strong for literary nature, which is not always human. I can't conceive in what, and for what, he abuses you: what have you done?

[1] "Love laughs at Locksmiths," by George Colman the Younger.

[2] John Hunt, editor of the *Examiner*. "Wat Tyler" was reviewed in the *Examiner* for May 4, 1817, and, in the numbers for May 11 and May 18, Southey's letter was violently attacked, and Murray himself not spared.

you are not an author — nor a politician — nor a public character; I know no scrape you have tumbled into. I am the more sorry for this, because I introduced you to Hunt, and because I believe him to be a very good man; but till I know the particulars, I can give no opinion.

Let me know about *Lallah Rookh,* which must be out by this time.

I restore the proofs, but the *punctuation* should be corrected. I feel too lazy to have at it myself; so beg and pray Mr. Gifford for me. Address for Venice. In a few days I go to my *Villeggiatura,* in a casino near the Brenta,[1] a few miles only on the mainland. I have determined on another year, and *many years,* of residence, if I can compass them. Marianna is with me, hardly recovered of the fever, which has been attacking all Italy last winter. I am afraid she is a little hectic; but I hope the best.

Ever yours truly,

B.

P. S. — Torwaltzen has done a bust of me at Rome for Mr. Hobhouse, which is reckoned very good.[2] He is their best after Canova, and by some preferred to him.

[1] The "deep-dyed" Brenta flows, from its source in Tyrol, past Padua into the Lagoon at Fusina. Byron's villa La Mira was on the river near Mira, about seven miles inland.

[2] The original of the bust is now in the possession of Lady Dorchester, daughter of Mr. Hobhouse. The head of the statue at Trinity College, Cambridge, begun by Thorwaldsen in 1829, and finished in 1834, is a repetition of the original bust.

TO THOMAS MOORE

La Mira, Venice, July 10, 1817.

Murray, the Mokanna[1] of booksellers, has contrived to send me extracts from *Lalla Rookh* by the post. They are taken from some magazine, and contain a short outline and quotations from the two first Poems. I am very much delighted with what is before me, and very thirsty for the rest. You have caught the colours as if you had been in the rainbow, and the tone of the East is perfectly preserved. I am glad you have changed the title from "Persian Tale." . . .

I suspect you have written a devilish fine composition, and I rejoice in it from my heart; because "the Douglas and the Percy both together are confident against a world in arms." I hope you won't be affronted at my looking on us as "birds of a feather"; though, on whatever subject you had written, I should have been very happy in your success. . . .

Do you remember that damned supper at Rancliffe's that ought to have been a *dinner?* "Ah, Master Shallow, we have heard the chimes at midnight." But

> My boat is on the shore,
> And my bark is on the sea;
> But, before I go, Tom Moore,
> Here 's a double health to thee!

[1] An allusion to the all-powerful Veiled Mokanna in "Lalla Rookh."

Here 's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And whatever sky 's above me,
Here 's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were 't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'T is to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be — peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

This should have been written fifteen moons ago — the first stanza was.[1] I am just come out from an hour's swim in the Adriatic; and I write to you with a black-eyed Venetian girl before me, reading Boccaccio. . . .

Last week I had a row on the road (I came up to Venice from my casino, a few miles on the Paduan road, this blessed day, to bathe) with a fellow in a carriage, who was impudent to my horse. I gave him a swingeing box on the ear, which sent him to the police, who dismissed his complaint. Witnesses had seen the transaction. He first shouted, in an unseemly way, to frighten my palfry I wheeled round, rode up to the window, and asked him

[1] The lines were partly written in April, 1816.

what he meant. He grinned, and said some foolery, which produced him an immediate slap in the face, to his utter discomfiture. Much blasphemy ensued, and some menace, which I stopped by dismounting and opening the carriage door, and intimating an intention of mending the road with his immediate remains, if he did not hold his tongue. He held it.

Monk Lewis is here — "how pleasant!" He is a very good fellow, and very much yours. So is Sam — so is every body — and amongst the number,

Yours ever,

B.

P. S. — What think you of *Manfred?* . . .

TO JOHN MURRAY

September 15, 1817.

. . . . . .

The other day I wrote to convey my proposition with regard to the fourth and concluding canto.[1] I have gone over and extended it to one hundred and fifty stanzas, which is almost as long as the two first were originally, and longer by itself than any of the smaller poems except *The Corsair*. Mr. Hobhouse has made some very valuable and accurate notes of considerable length, and you may be sure I will do for the text all that I can to finish with decency. I look upon *Childe Harold* as my best; and as I begun, I think of concluding with it. But I make no resolutions on that head, as I broke my former intention with regard to *The Corsair*. However, I fear that I shall never do better; and yet, not being thirty years of age for some

[1] Of "Childe Harold."

MONUMENT to Galileo, in Santa Croce, Florence, by Foggini.

"*The starry Galileo, with his woes.*"

—Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza liv, p. 71.

moons to come, one ought to be progressive as far as Intellect goes for many a good year. But I have had a devilish deal of wear and tear of mind and body in my time, besides having published too often and much already. God grant me some judgment! to do what may be most fitting in that and everything else, for I doubt my own exceedingly.

I have read *Lallah Rookh*, but not with sufficient attention yet, for I ride about, and lounge, and ponder, and — two or three other things; so that my reading is very desultory, and not so attentive as it used to be. I am very glad to hear of its popularity, for Moore is a very noble fellow in all respects, and will enjoy it without any of the bad feeling which success — good or evil — sometimes engenders in the men of rhyme. Of the poem itself, I will tell you my opinion when I have mastered it: I say of the *poem*, for I don't like the *prose* at all — at all; and in the meantime, "The Fire Worshippers" is the best, and "The Veiled Prophet" the worst, of the volume.

With regard to poetry in general,[1] I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he and *all* of us — Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I, — are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by

[1] On this paragraph, in the MS. copy of the above letter, is the following note, in the handwriting of Mr. Gifford: "There is more good sense, and feeling, and judgment in this passage, than in any other I ever read, or Lord Byron wrote."

having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly *Pope*, whom I tried in this way: I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's, and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, harmony, effect, and even *Imagination*, passion, and *Invention*, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and Claudian now, among us; and if I had to begin again, I would model myself accordingly. Crabbe's . . . got a coarse and impracticable subject, and Rogers, the Grandfather of living Poetry, is retired upon half-pay (I don't mean as a Banker), —

Since pretty Miss Jaqueline,
With her nose aquiline,

and has done enough, unless he were to do as he did formerly.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CANTO THE FOURTH

Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
Quel Monte che divide, e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l' altro, che la bagna.[1]
ARIOSTO, *Satira* iii.

VENICE, *January* 2, 1818.

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ., A. M., F. R. S., &c.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE, — After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos

[1] "I have seen Tuscany, Lombardy, and the Romagna, the mountain range that divides Italy and that which hems her in, and the one and the other sea that bathes her"

of *Childe Harold*, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better, — to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than — though not ungrateful — I can, or could be, to *Childe Harold*, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet, — to one, whom I have known long, and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril, — to a friend often tried and never found wanting; — to yourself.

. . . . . .

In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us — though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode — to distrust, or at least

defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary, as well as political party, appears to run, or to *have* run, so high, that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language — "Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l' antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima."[1] Italy has great names still: Canova, Monti, Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognara, Albrizzi, Mezzophanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres, and in some the very highest; Europe — the World — has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri, that "La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra — e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova."[2] Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours, that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly

[1] "It seems to me in a country wholly poetic, which boasts a language at once the noblest and the sweetest, all the different ways may be tried, and that since the land of Alfieri and of Monti has not lost her ancient worth, she should, in all, be the first."

[2] "The human plant, in Italy, grows more robust than in any other land, and even the atrocious crimes committed there are a proof of it."

heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched "longing after immortality," — the immortality of independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, "Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più come era prima," [1] it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the carnage of Mont St. Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me, —

> "Non movero mai corda
> Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda." [2]

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations, it were useless for Englishmen to enquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus: it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, "Verily they *will have* their reward," and at no very distant period.

[1] "Rome! Rome! Rome! no longer is she what once she was."

[2] "Never will I touch the lyre where the rabble deafens me with its fooleries."

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever,

Your obliged
And affectionate friend,
BYRON.

I

I STOOD in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand;
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers.
And such she was; — her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

BRIDGE of Sighs, at Venice.

"I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza i, p. 60.

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone, but Beauty still is here;
States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway:
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre[1] can not be swept or worn away,
The keystones of the arch! — though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

. . . . . .

XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And annual marriage now no more renew'd,
The Bucentaur[2] lies rotting unrestored,

[1] A conspirator in Otway's "Venice Preserved."

[2] Burned by the French in 1797. A copy may be seen in Museum at Arsenal of Venice.

Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood[1]
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns —
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt: —
Oh, for one hour of blind old Dandolo,[2]
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not *bridled?*[3] — Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,

[1] The winged Lion of St. Mark stands on a granite column at entrance to Piazzetta. Here in 1177 the Suabian Emperor Barbarossa submitted to Pope Alexander III.

[2] Dandolo, Doge of Venice, was ninety-seven years old when he commanded the Venetians at the taking of Constantinople.

[3] When the Venetians sued Doria for peace (1379) his answer was: "Not until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, that are upon the porch of your St. Mark."

TWO of the Bronze Horses on Church of St. Mark, Venice.
Clock Tower, adorned with Lion of St. Mark, on left.

"Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xiii, p. 62.

Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV

In youth she was all glory, a new Tyre,
Her very by-word sprung from victory,
The "Planter of the Lion," which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;—
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

XV

Statues of glass — all shiver'd — the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthralls,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:

See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands — his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt — he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations, — most of all,
Albion, to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart:
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,[1]
Had stamp'd her image in me; and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

[1] *Venice Preserved; Mysteries of Udolpho; The Ghost-Seer, or Armenian; The Merchant of Venice; Othello.* (Byron's Note.)

RIALTO Bridge at Venice.

" *Ours is a trophy which will not decay*
With the Rialto ; Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre can not be swept or worn away."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza iv, p. 61.

XIX

I can repeople with the past — and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditations chasten'd down, enough,
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice, have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

. . . . . .

XXV

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave — the lords of earth and sea,

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy,
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;

Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her, a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air, an island of the blest!

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order: gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

PETRARCH'S Tomb in Arqua.

"There is a tomb in Arqua; — rear'd in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xxx, p. 67.

XXIX

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which from afar
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse.
And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till — 't is gone — and all is gray.

XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua; rear'd in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes;
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua where he died,
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 't is their pride —
An honest pride, and let it be their praise —
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze

His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook, where-by,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.
If from society we learn to live,
'T is solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone — man with his God must strive:

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest day

CHURCH of Santa Croce, Florence.

" *In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie*
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza liv, p. 71.
— See Letter from Foligno, p. 32.

And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

. . . . . .

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's[1] injured shade! 't was his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss.
Oh, victor unsurpass'd in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a mind like thine? Though all in one
Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a sun.

XL

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry[2]: first rose
The Tuscan father's comedy divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine
The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,[3]
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

. . . . . .

[1] Torquato Tasso. See "Lament of Tasso," p. 18.
[2] Dante and Ariosto. [3] Walter Scott.

XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts, as once of arms; thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our Religion, whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentant of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn and wine and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone,[1] and fills
The air around with beauty. We inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality; the veil

[1] The Venus de' Medici.

VENUS de' Medici in Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

"The Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty; . . . within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What mind can make when Nature's self would fail."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xlix p. 70.

Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What mind can make when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond idolaters of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould.

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there — for ever there
Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives and would not depart.
Away! — there need no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart
Where Pedantry gulls Folly — we have eyes:
Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.

. . . . . .

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation. Italy!
Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky
Spirits which soar from ruin: — thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three —
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit, he
Of the Hundred Tales of love — where did they lay
Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,[1]
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore;
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
Their children's children would in vain adore

[1] Dante, buried at Ravenna; the elder Scipio Africanus, at Liternum.

CASTLE of Passignano on Lake Trasimeno, where Hannibal's principal force was posted, 217 B.C.

"There the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxii, p. 74.

With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled — not thine own.[1]

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
His dust; and lies it not her Great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No; — even his tomb
Uptorn must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom!*[2]

LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust, —
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more.
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire, honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile; Arqua, too, her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead, and weeps.

[1] Petrarch was crowned with the laurel wreath at Rome in 1341. His grave was rifled in 1630.

[2] Boccaccio's tombstone was torn up and ejected from the church at Certaldo, where he was buried.

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones,
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? The momentary dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
There be more marvels yet — but not for mine;
For I have been accustom'd to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
Than Art in galleries: though a work divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles

LAKE Trasimeno, seen from San Savino.

" Far other scene is Trasimene now ;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxv, p. 75.

The host between the mountains and the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain with legions scatter'd o'er,

LXIII

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;

Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en —
A little rill of scanty stream and bed —
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet and turn'd the unwilling waters red.

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus, in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes, — the purest god of gentle waters,
And most serene of aspect, and most clear!
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters —
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scatter'd water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

A fifth century structure.

"And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxvii, p. 76.

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 't is his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism, — 't is to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters! — from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald: — how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,

Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale: — Look back!
Lo, where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread — a matchless cataract,

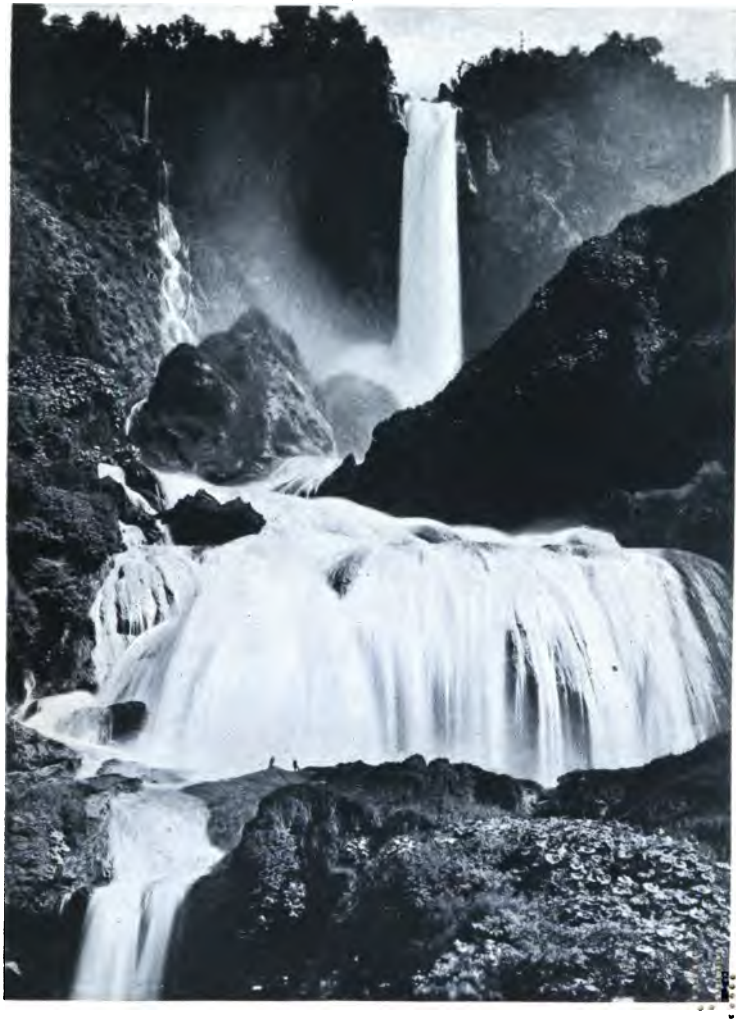
LXXII

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn;
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which — had I not before
Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar

THE Falls at Terni.



" Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread, — a matchless cataract."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxi, p. 78.

The thundering lauwine[1] — might be worshipp'd more,
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 't were for fame,
For still they soar'd unutterably high:
I 've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height, display'd
Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid[2]

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing. Not in vain
May he, who will, his recollections rake,
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhorr'd
Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

[1] *Lauwine* is the Swiss name for avalanche.

[2] An allusion to one of the odes of Horace in which he speaks of Soracte as white with snow.

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn'd
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught
My mind to meditate what then it learn'd,
Yet such the fix'd inveteracy wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That, with the freshness wearing out before
My mind could relish what it might have sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

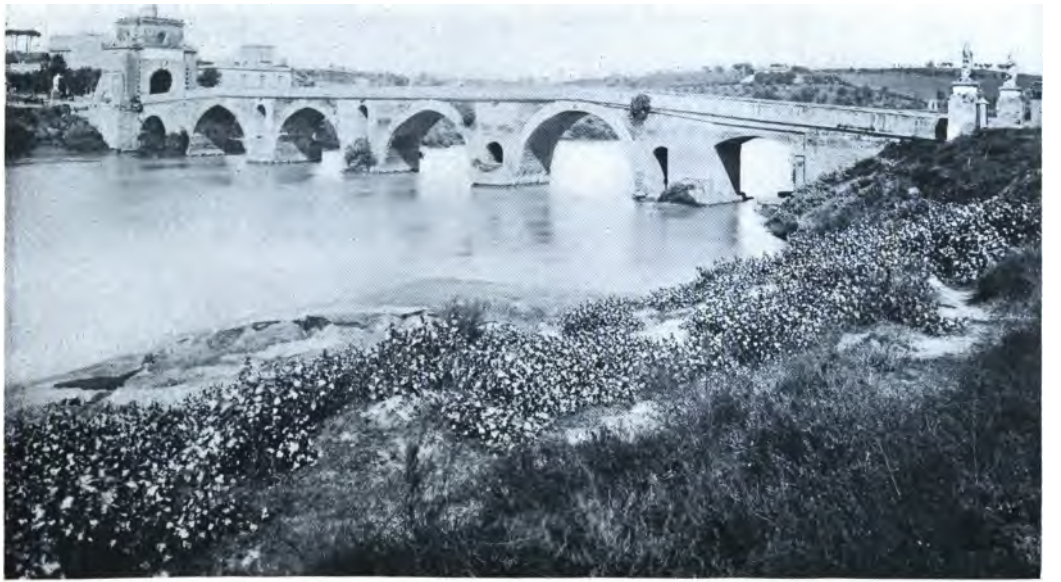
LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse,
Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart; —
Yet fare thee well — upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII

O Rome, my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.

RIVER Tiber and Milvian Bridge at Rome.



" Dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!"
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxix, p. 81.

What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago:
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;[1]
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers;—dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride:
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride
Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:—
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

[1] The tomb of the Scipios was discovered and rifled in 1780.

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear —
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! — but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII

O thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due

THE Bronze Wolf, probably of the fifth century, B.C.

"And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf, ... dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?"

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxxviii, p. 83.

Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; — thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates — Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath, — couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings — Oh, she who was Almighty hail'd!

. . . . . .

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome![1]
She-wolf, whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest; mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

. . . . . .

[1] According to Cicero, the bronze statute of the wolf was struck by lightning.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:

TOMB of Cecilia Metella on Appian Way at Rome. Alban Mount in distance.

"*There is a stern round tower of other days,*
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,

. . . . . .

What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave." — Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xcix, p. 85.

Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,[1]
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown; —
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's — or more — a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honour'd — and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

[1] Tomb of Cecilia Metella, on the Appian Way, used as a fortress in the Middle Ages.

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? — such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? — for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites — early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day

MOUNT Soracte, near Rome.

"The lone Soracte's height, . . .
. . . . . from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing."

— **Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxv,** p. 79.

When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome. — But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know — Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his love or pride!

CIV

I know not why, but standing thus by thee,
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear.
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? — let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls —
Behold the Imperial Mount! 't is thus the mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last.

COLUMN in Roman Forum, named in 1818 Column of Phocas. Excavations in 1904 reveal an earlier date by four centuries, and place it in the time of Diocletian (A.D. 284).

"Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cx, p. 89.

And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page, — 't is better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask. — Away with words, draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult — despise — laugh, weep, — for here
There is such matter for all feeling: — Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base![1]
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,

[1] This column ceased to be "nameless" in 1818 when it received the name by which it has since been called — Column of Phocas. Archæologists in 1904, owing to explorations round the "buried base," have decided that it belongs to the time of Diocletian, A. D. 284, and not Phocas.

Titus' or Trajan's? No — 't is that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb [1]
To crush the imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars. They had contain'd
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd
But yielded back his conquests: he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place [2]
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep
Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with Cicero!

[1] The statue of St. Peter supplants that of Trajan on the top of Trajan's column.

[2] The temple of Jupiter probably stood on the southeast section of the Capitoline Hill, the present site of Palazzo Caffarelli.

CAPITOLINE Hill, Rome.

" Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes ? "

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxii, p. 90.

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame —
The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —
The forum's champion, and the people's chief —
Her new-born Numa thou — with reign, alas, too brief.

CXV

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art
Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air,

The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled. The green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

GROTTO of Egeria, near Rome.

" Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxviii, p. 93.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy; and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle!

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? Could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —
The dull satiety which all destroys —
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloys?

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,

Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; — such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI

O Love! no habitant of earth thou art —
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul — parch'd — wearied — wrung — and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation: — where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized? —
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

TARPEIAN Rock, Rome.

" The steep
Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxii, p. 90.

CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 't is youth's frenzy; but the cure
Is bitterer still. As charm by charm unwinds
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oftsown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize, — wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away —
Sick — sick; unfound the boon — unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first —
But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 't is the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst —
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies — but to recur, ere long,

Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust, — the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature, 't is not in
The harmony of things, — this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —
Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see —
And worse, the woes we see not — which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly; 't is a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought, our last and only place
Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be mine.
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chain'd and tortured — cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

STATUE of the Laocoon,
Vatican Gallery at Rome.

"Turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza clx, p. 104.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome, —
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are its dower.

. . . . . .

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because

Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood. — Shall he expire
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

"THE Dying Gaul," in Capitoline Museum at Rome.
(Called in Byron's time "The Dying Gladiator.")

"*He leans upon his hand — his manly brow*
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
. . . . . *he is gone,*
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxl, p. 98.

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much, and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air

The garland forest,[1] which the gray walls wear
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 't is on their dust ye tread.

CXLV

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls — the World." From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

[1] The "garland forest" of shrubs and wild flowers has now been removed, lest the action of the roots should hasten the disintegration of the ruins.

THE Pantheon, Rome.

"*Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —*
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time ;
. . . . . sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon ! — pride of Rome !"
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxlvi, p. 100.

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts!
Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts around them close.

. . . . . .

CLIII

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome
To which Diana's marvel was a cell,
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He

Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI

Thou movest — but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise —
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines where flame
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the clouds must claim.

REAR View of St. Peter's, with view of dome designed by Michel Angelo.

"But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome
To which Diana's marvel was a cell,
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!"
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cliii, p. 101.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break
To separate contemplation the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault — but thine. Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise

Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending. Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light, —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

INTERIOR of St. Peter's, Rome.

" Enter : its grandeur overwhelms thee not :
And why ? it is not lessen'd ; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza clv, p. 102.

CLXII

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above
And madden'd in that vision — are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest —
A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 't was wrought.

. . . . . .

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears

Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake; —
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV

But I forget. — My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part — so let it be:
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

APOLLO Belvedere, in Vatican Gallery at Rome.

"Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light, —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza clxi, p. 104.

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long years —
Long, though not very many — since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here, —
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh, that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted, can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot,
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot?

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:

I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there let him lay.

LAKE Nemi and the Town of Nemi.

"*Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills*
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from its foundation, . . .
. . . . . reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake." — Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza clxxiii, p. 105.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime

Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done — my song hath ceased — my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ, —
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been — and my visions flit
Less palpably before me — and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

LAKE Albano and Castel Gandolfo.

" *And near Albano's scarce divided waves*
Shine from a sister valley."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza clxxiv, p. 106.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been —
A sound which makes us linger; — yet — farewell!
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were — with *you*, the moral of his strain!

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, October 23, 1817.

. . . . . .

Mr. Whistlecraft[1] has no greater admirer than myself. I have written a story in 89 stanzas, in imitation of him, called *Beppo* (the short name for Giuseppe, that is, the *Joe* of the Italian Joseph), which I shall throw you into the balance of the 4th Canto to help you round to your money; but you perhaps had better publish it anonymously; but this we will see to by and bye.

. . . . . .

With regard to a future large edition, you may print all, or any thing, except *English Bards*,[2] to the republication of which at *no* time will I consent. I would not reprint them on any consideration. I don't think them

[1] *Nom-de-plume* of John Hookham Frere.

[2] "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," written by Byron at the age of 21, was full of injustice and indiscriminate abuse, which he now regrets.

good for much, even in point of poetry; and, as to other things, you are to recollect that I gave up the publication on account of the *Hollands*, and I do not think that any time or circumstances can neutralise my suppression. Add to which, that, after being on terms with almost all the bards and Critics of the day, it would be savage at any time, but worst of all *now when in another country* to revive this foolish lampoon. . . .

The Review of *Manfred* came very safely, and I am much pleased with it. It is odd that they should say (that is, somebody in a magazine whom the *Edinburgh* controverts) that it was taken from Marlow's *Faustus*, which I never read nor saw. An American, who came the other day from Germany, told Mr. Hobhouse that *Manfred* was taken from Goethe's *Faust*. The devil may take both the Faustuses, German and English, — I have taken neither.

FROM "BEPPO: A VENETIAN STORY"

. . . . . .

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore, —
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI

They 've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet expressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimick'd ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best 's at Florence — see it, if ye will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that 's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'T is but a portrait of his son, and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Wer 't not impossible, besides a shame.
The face recalls some face, as 't were with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty 's sometimes best set off afar),
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
And, truth to say, they 're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more 's the pity!

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mercuries
Who do such things because they know no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may arise
When love links two young people in one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows and hearts and heads.

XVII

Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a "cavalier servente."

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows;
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I 'll describe it you exactly:
'T is a long cover'd boat that 's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly;
Row'd by two rowers, each call'd "Gondolier,"
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow;
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe,—
But not to them do woful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral 's done.

. . . . . .

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy 's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way,—
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dray.

MONUMENT to Niccolo Machiavelli, in Santa Croce, Florence. Designed by Spinazzi.

"Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza liv, p. 71.

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he 'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we 're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us? — in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,
Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII

"England! with all thy faults I love thee still,"
I said at Calais and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 't is not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beefsteak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

. . . . . .

LXXV

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the "mighty mother's,"
The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready,"
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* to them would seem a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 't would almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics.

LXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I 'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

MONUMENT to Alfieri, in Santa Croce, Florence. Designed by Canova.

" Here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza liv, p. 71

TO JAMES WEDDERBURN WEBSTER

VENICE, May 31st 1818.

DEAR WEBSTER,—I am truly sorry to hear of your domestic misfortune, and, as I know the inefficacy of words, shall turn from the subject.

I am not even aware of your return to France, where I presume that you are a resident. For my own part after going down to Florence and Rome last year, I returned to Venice, where I have since remained — and may probably continue to remain for some years — being partial to the people, the language, and the habits of life; there are few English here, and those mostly birds of passage, excepting one or two who are domesticated like myself.

I have the Palazzo Mocenigo on the Canal' Grande for three years to come, and a pretty Villa in the Euganean hills for the Summer for nearly the same term.

While I remain in the city itself, I keep my horses on an Island with a good beach, about half a mile from the town, so that I get a gallop of some miles along the shore of the Adriatic daily; the Stables belong to the Fortress, but are let on fair terms.

I was always very partial to Venice, and it has not hitherto disappointed me; but I am not sure that the English in general would like it. I am sure that I should *not*, if *they* did; but, by the benevolence of God, they prefer Florence and Naples, and do not infest us greatly here. In other respects it is very agreeable for Gentlemen of desultory habits — women — wine — and wassail being all extremely fair and reasonable — theatres, etc., good —

and Society (after a time) as pleasant as any where else (at least to my mind), if you will live with them in their own way — which is different, of course, from the Ultramontane in some degree.

The Climate is Italian and that's enough, and the Gondolas, etc., etc., and habits of the place make it like a romance, for it is by no means even now the most regular and correct moral city in the universe. Young and old — pretty and ugly — high and low — are employed in the laudable practice of Lovemaking — and though most Beauty is found amongst the middling and lower classes — this of course only renders their amatory habits more universally diffused.

I shall be very glad to hear from or of you when you are so disposed — and with my best regards to Lady Frances — believe me,

Very truly yours,

B.

P. S. — If ever you come this way, let me have a letter beforehand, in case I can be of use.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, February 1, 1819.

DEAR SIR, — After one of the concluding stanzas of the first Canto of *Don Juan,* which ends with (I forget the number) —

To have . . . . . .
. . . . . when the original is dust,
A book, a damned bad picture, and worse bust,

insert the following stanza —

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's King
Cheops erected the first Pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
To keep his Memory whole, and Mummy hid,
But Somebody or Other rummaging
Burglariously broke his Coffin's lid:
Let not a Monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust is left of Cheops![1]

I have written to you several letters, some with additions, and some upon the subject of the poem itself, which my cursed puritanical committee[2] have protested against publishing; but we will circumvent them on that point in the end. I have not yet begun to copy out the second Canto, which is finished, from natural laziness, and the discouragement of the milk and water they have thrown upon the first. I say all this to them as to you; that is, for *you* to say to *them*, for I will have nothing underhand. If they had told me the poetry was bad, I would have acquiesced; but they say the contrary, and then talk to me about morality — the first time I ever heard the word from any body who was not a rascal that used it for a purpose. I maintain that it is the most moral of poems; but if people won't discover the moral, that is their fault, not

[1] "Don Juan," Canto I, stanza ccxix.

[2] Byron's friends, Hobhouse, Kinnaird, Scrope Davies, Moore, and Frere, to whom the first Canto of "Don Juan" had been submitted, decided unanimously against its publication. The first two Cantos, however, were published on July 15, 1819, but without the name of either author or publisher.

mine. I have already written to beg that in any case you will print *fifty* for private distribution. I will send you the list of persons to whom it is to be sent afterwards.

Within this last fortnight I have been rather indisposed with a rebellion of Stomach, which would retain nothing (liver, I suppose), and an inability, or phantasy, not to be able to eat of any thing with relish but a kind of Adriatic fish called *Scampi*, which happens to be the most indigestible of marine viands. However, within these last two days, I am better, and

Very truly yours,

BYRON.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, April 6, 1819.

DEAR SIR, — The second Canto of *Don Juan* was sent on Saturday last, by post, in four packets, two of four and two of three sheets each, containing in all two hundred and seventeen stanzas, octave measure. But I will permit no curtailments, except those mentioned about Castlereagh and the two *Bobs*[1] in the Introduction. You sha'n't make *Canticles* of my Cantos. The poem will please, if it is lively; if it is stupid, it will fail; but I will have none of your damned cutting and slashing. If you please, you may publish *anonymously;* it will perhaps be better; but I will battle my way against them all, like a Porcupine.

So you and Mr. Foscolo,[2] etc., want me to undertake

[1] Part of which was finally retained.

[2] Ugo, originally Niccolo, Foscolo (1778-1827), a native of Zante, patriot, poet, dramatist, and critic.

MONUMENT to Michel Angelo, in Santa Croce, Florence. Designed by Vasari.

"*Here repose*
Angelo's . . . bones."
— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza liv, p. 71.

what you call a "great work"? — an Epic poem, I suppose, or some such pyramid. I'll try no such thing; I hate tasks. And then "seven or eight years"! God send us all well this day three months, let alone years. If one's years can't be better employed than in sweating poesy, a man had better be a ditcher. And works, too! — is *Childe Harold* nothing? You have so many "*divine*" poems, is it nothing to have written a *Human* one? without any of your worn-out machinery. Why, man, I could have spun the thoughts of the four cantos of that poem into twenty, had I wanted to book-make, and its passion into as many modern tragedies. Since you want *length*, you shall have enough of *Juan*, for I'll make 50 cantos.

And Foscolo, too! Why does *he* not do something more than the *Letters of Ortis*, and a tragedy, and pamphlets? He has good fifteen years more at his command than I have: what has he done all that time? — proved his Genius, doubtless, but not fixed its fame, nor done his utmost.

Besides, I mean to write my best work in *Italian*, and it will take me nine years more thoroughly to master the language; and then if my fancy exist, and I exist too, I will try what I *can* do *really*. As to the Estimation of the English which you talk of, let them calculate what it is worth, before they insult me with their insolent condescension.

I have not written for their pleasure. If they are pleased, it is that they chose to be so; I have never flattered their opinions, nor their pride; nor will I. Neither will I make "Ladies' books" *al dilettar le femine*

e la plebe. I have written from the fulness of my mind, from passion, from impulse, from many motives, but not for their "sweet voices."

I know the precise worth of popular applause, for few Scribblers have had more of it; and if I chose to swerve into their paths, I could retain it, or resume it, or increase it. But I neither love ye, nor fear ye; and though I buy with ye and sell with ye, and talk with ye, I will neither eat with ye, drink with ye, nor pray with ye. They made me, without my search, a species of popular Idol; they, without reason or judgment, beyond the caprice of their good pleasure, threw down the Image from its pedestal; it was not broken with the fall, and they would, it seems, again replace it — but they shall not.

You ask about my health: about the beginning of the year I was in a state of great exhaustion, attended by such debility of Stomach that nothing remained upon it; and I was obliged to reform my "way of life," which was conducting me from the "yellow leaf" to the Ground, with all deliberate speed. I am better in health and morals, and very much yours ever,

BN.

TO JOHN MURRAY

BOLOGNA, June 7, 1819.

DEAR SIR, — Tell Mr. Hobhouse that I wrote to him a few days ago from Ferrara. It will therefore be idle in him or you to wait for any further answers or returns of proofs from Venice, as I have directed that no English

letters be sent after me. The publication can be proceeded in without, and I am already sick of your remarks, to which I think not the least attention ought to be paid.

Tell Mr. Hobhouse that, since I wrote to him, I had availed myself of my Ferrara letters, and found the society much younger and better there than at Venice. I was very much pleased with the little the shortness of my stay permitted me to see of the Gonfaloniere Count Mosti, and his family and friends in general.

I have been picture-gazing this morning at the famous Domenichino and Guido,[1] both of which are superlative. I afterwards went to the beautiful Cemetery of Bologna, beyond the walls, and found, besides the superb Burial-ground, an original of a *Custode*, who reminded me of the grave-digger in *Hamlet*. He has a collection of Capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them, said, "This was Brother Desiderio Berro, who died at forty — one of my best friends. I begged his head of his brethren after his decease, and they gave it me. I put it in lime and then boiled it. Here it is, teeth and all, in excellent preservation. He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew. Wherever he went, he brought joy; and when any one was melancholy, the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again. He walked so actively, you might have taken him for a dancer — he joked — he laughed — oh! he was such a Frate as I never saw before, nor ever shall again!"

[1] Probably Domenichino's "Martyrdom of St. Peter, the Dominican," or his "Martyrdom of St. Agnes," and Guido's "Slaughter of the Innocents."

He told me that he had himself planted all the Cypresses in the Cemetery; that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people; that since 1801 they had buried fifty-three thousand persons. In showing some older monuments, there was that of a Roman girl of twenty, with a bust by Bernini. She was a Princess Barberini, dead two centuries ago: he said that, on opening her grave, they had found her hair complete, and "as yellow as gold." Some of the epitaphs at Ferrara pleased me more than the more splendid monuments of Bologna; for instance: —

"Martini Luigi
Implora pace."

"Lucrezia Picini
Implora eterna quiete."

Can any thing be more full of pathos? Those few words say all that can be said or sought: the dead had had enough of life; all they wanted was rest, and this they "*implore.*" There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and deathlike prayer, that can arise from the grave — "*implora pace.*" I hope, whoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, within the fortress by the Adriatic, will see those two words, and no more, put over me. I trust they won't think of "pickling, and bringing me home to Clod or Blunderbuss Hall." I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my deathbed, could I suppose that any of my friends

A Corner of the Palatine Hill.

" *Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown*
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, . . .
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cvii, p. 88.

would be base enough to convey my carcase back to your soil. I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it.

ODE ON VENICE

I

O Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
  Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
  A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do? — anything but weep:
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers — as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam,
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
O agony! that centuries should reap
No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets.
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum,
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,

That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas — and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain; —
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirits soaring — albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him — and the dizzy
Chamber swims round and round — and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,

And all is ice and blackness, — and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II

There is no hope for nations! Search the page
Of many thousand years — the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 't is our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order — they must go
Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real;*
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme! — Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
Save the few spirits, who, despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd

By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains — when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore, — in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand, — or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'T was not for them, their necks were too much bow'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain: —
Yes! the few spirits — who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations — fair, when free —
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom — godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench, her spirit — in her fate
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled. With the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes

She was the voyager's worship; — even her crimes
Were of the softer order — born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
And call'd the "kingdom" of a conquering foe, —
But knows what all and, most of all, *we* know —
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

IV

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe.
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 't is but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd, a heritage of heart and hand,

And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science, —
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic! — She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feebler crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood: — Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
That it should flow and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
Damn'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces and then faltering: — better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,
Than stagnate in our marsh, — or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, June 29, 1819.

. . . . . .

I have been here (at Ravenna) these four weeks, having left Venice a month ago; — I came to see my *Amica*, the Countess Guiccioli, who has been, and still continues, very

unwell. . . . She is only twenty years old, but not of a strong constitution. . . . She has a perpetual cough and an intermittent fever, but bears up most *gallantly* in every sense of the word. Her husband (this is his third wife) is the richest noble of Ravenna, and almost of Romagna; he is also *not* the youngest, being upwards of threescore, but in good preservation. All this will appear strange to you, who do not understand the Meridian morality, nor our way of life in such respects, and I cannot at present expound the difference; — but you would find it much the same in these parts. At Faenza there is Lord Kinnaird with an opera girl; and at the inn in the same town is a Neapolitan Prince, who serves the wife of the Gonfaloniere of that city. I am on duty here — so you see "Così fan tutti e tutte."

I have my horses here — *saddle* as well as carriage — and ride or drive every day in the forest, the *Pineta*, the scene of Boccaccio's novel, and Dryden's fable of Honoria, etc., etc., and I see my *Dama* every day at the proper (and improper) hours; but I feel seriously uneasy about her health, which seems very precarious. In losing her, I should lose a being who has run great risks on my account, and whom I have every reason to love — but I must not think this possible. I do not know what I *should* do if she died, but I ought to blow my brains out — and I hope that I should. Her husband is a very polite personage, but I wish he would not carry me out in his Coach and Six, like Whittington and his Cat.

You ask me if I mean to continue *D. J.*, etc. How should I know? what encouragement do you give me, all

of you, with your nonsensical prudery? publish the two Cantos, and then you will see. I desired Mr. Kinnaird to speak to you on a little matter of business; either he has not spoken, or you have not answered. You are a pretty pair, but I will be even with you both.

. . . . . .

TO JOHN MURRAY

Bologna, August 12, 1819.

. . . . . .

You are right, Gifford is right, Crabbe is right,[1] Hobhouse is right — you are all right, and I am all wrong; but do, pray, let me have that pleasure. Cut me up root and branch; quarter me in the *Quarterly;* send round my *disjecti membra poetæ,* like those of the Levite's Concubine; make me, if you will, a spectacle to men and angels; but don't ask me to alter, for I can't: — I am obstinate and lazy — and there 's the truth.

But, nevertheless, I will answer your friend C[ohen], who objects to the quick succession of fun and gravity, as if in that case the gravity did not (in intention, at least) heighten the fun. His metaphor is, that "we are never scorched and drenched at the same time." Blessings on his experience! Ask him these questions about "scorching and drenching." Did he never play at Cricket, or walk a mile in hot weather? Did he never spill a dish of tea over himself in handing the cup to his charmer, to the great shame of his nankeen breeches? Did he never swim

[1] Concerning "Don Juan."

TRAJAN'S Column in Forum of Trajan, Rome.

"He was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxi, p. 90.

in the sea at Noonday with the Sun in his eyes and on his head, which all the foam of Ocean could not cool? Did he never draw his foot out of a tub of too hot water, damning his eyes and his valet's? . . . Was he ever in a Turkish bath, that marble paradise of sherbet and Sodomy? Was he ever in a cauldron of boiling oil, like St. John? or in the sulphureous waves of hell? (where he ought to be for his "scorching and drenching at the same time"). Did he never tumble into a river or lake, fishing, and sit in his wet cloathes in the boat, or on the bank, afterwards "scorched and drenched," like a true sportsman? "Oh, for breath to utter!" — but make him my compliments; he is a clever fellow for all that — a very clever fellow.

You ask me for the plan of Donny Johnny: I *have* no plan — I *had* no plan; but I had or have materials; though if, like Tony Lumpkin,[1] I am "to be snubbed so when I am in spirits," the poem will be naught, and the poet turn serious again. If it don't take, I will leave it off where it is, with all due respect to the Public; but if continued, it must be in my own way. You might as well make Hamlet (or Diggory)[2] "act mad" in a strait waistcoat as trammel my buffoonery, if I am to be a buffoon: their gestures and my thoughts would only be pitiably absurd and ludicrously constrained. Why, Man, the Soul of such writing is its license; at least the *liberty* of that *license*, if one likes — *not* that one should abuse it: it is

[1] In "She Stoops to Conquer," Act ii.

[2] "Diggory," the stage-struck servant at Strawberry Hall, in Jackman's farce "All the World 's a Stage."

like trial by Jury and Peerage and the Habeas Corpus — a very fine thing, but chiefly in the *reversion;* because no one wishes to be tried for the mere pleasure of proving his possession of the privilege.

But a truce with these reflections. You are too earnest and eager about a work never intended to be serious. Do you suppose that I could have any intention but to giggle and make giggle? — a playful satire, with as little poetry as could be helped, was what I meant: and as to the indecency, do, pray, read in Boswell what *Johnson,* the sullen moralist, says of *Prior* and Paulo Purgante.[1]

Will you get a favour done for me? *You* can, by your Government friends, Croker, Canning, or my old Schoolfellow Peel, and I can't. Here it is. Will you ask them to appoint (*without salary or emolument*) a noble Italian[2] (whom I will name afterwards) Consul or Vice-Consul for Ravenna? He is a man of very large property, — noble, too; but he wishes to have a British protection, in case of changes. Ravenna is near the sea. He wants *no emolument* whatever: that his office might be useful, I know; as I lately sent off from Ravenna to Trieste a poor devil of an English Sailor, who had remained there sick, sorry, and penniless (having been set ashore in 1814), from the want of any accredited agent able or willing to help him homewards. Will you get this done? It will be the greatest favour to me. If you do, I will then send his name and condition, subject, of course, to rejection, if *not* approved when known.

[1] See Boswell's "Life of Johnson," ed. Hill, vol. iii., p. 192.

[2] Count Guiccioli, husband of Teresa Guiccioli.

I know that in the Levant you make consuls and Vice-Consuls, perpetually, of foreigners. This man is a Patrician, and has twelve thousand a year. His motive is a British protection in case of new Invasions. Don't you think Croker would do it for us? To be sure, *my interest* is rare!! but, perhaps a brother-wit in the Tory line might do a good turn at the request of so harmless and long absent a Whig, particularly as there is no *salary* nor *burthen* of any sort to be annexed to the office.

I can assure you, I should look upon it as a great obligation; but, alas! that very circumstance may, very probably, operate to the contrary — indeed, it ought. But I have, at least, been an honest and an open enemy. Amongst your many splendid Government Connections, could not you, think you, get our Bibulus made a Consul? Or make me one, that I may make him my Vice. You may be assured that, in case of accidents in Italy, he would be no feeble adjunct — as you would think if you knew his property.

TO JOHN MURRAY

VENICE, October 29, 1819.

. . . . . .

You say nothing of the Vice-Consulate for the Ravenna patrician, from which it is to be inferred that the thing will not be done.

I had written about a hundred stanzas of a *third* Canto to *Don Juan*, but the reception of the two first is no encouragement to you nor me to proceed.

I had also written about 600 lines of a poem, the *Vision* (or *Prophecy*) *of Dante*, the subject a view of Italy in the ages down to the present — supposing Dante to speak in his own person, previous to his death, and embracing all topics in the way of prophecy, like Lycophron's *Cassandra*.[1] But this and the other are both at a standstill for the present.

I gave Moore, who is gone to Rome, my *Life* in MS., in 78 folio sheets, brought down to 1816.[2] But this I put into his hands for *his* care, as he has some other MSS. of mine — a journal kept in 1814, etc. Neither are for publication during my life; but when I am cold you may do what you please. In the meantime, if you like to read them you may, and show them to anybody you like — I care not.

The *Life* is *Memoranda*, and not *Confessions*. I have left out all my *loves* (except in a general way), and many other of the most important things (because I must not compromise other people), so that it is like the play of "Hamlet" — "the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire." But you will find many opinions, and some fun, with a detailed account of my marriage and its consequences, as true as a party concerned can make such accounts, for I suppose we are all prejudiced.

I have never read over this life since it was written, so

[1] The *Cassandra* of Lycophron, Alexandrian poet and grammarian (circ. 284 B. C.), contains prophecies of events in Greek history.

[2] This formed a portion of the manuscript, which was completed December, 1820, and bought by Murray from Moore, November, 1821, for 2000 guineas. After Byron's death, the whole manuscript was destroyed by the advice of Byron's friends.

that I know not exactly what it may repeat or contain. Moore and I passed some merry days together,[1] but so far from "seducing me to England," as you suppose, the account he gave of me and mine was of anything but a nature to make me wish to return: it is not such opinions of the public that would weigh with me one way or the other; but I think they should weigh with others of my friends before they ask me to return to a place for which I have no great inclination.

I probably must return for business, or in my way to America. Pray, did you get a letter for Hobhouse, who will have told you the contents? I understood that the Venezuelan commissioners had orders to treat with emigrants; now I want to go there. I should not make a bad South American planter.

[1] Moore had recently made Byron a visit of four days.

THE Pineta at Ravenna.

"Evergreen forest! where Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!"

—Don Juan, Canto III, stanza cv, p. 289.

THE YEARS 1820 AND 1821

THE YEARS 1820 AND 1821

RAVENNA

INTRODUCTORY

IN the last month of the year 1819, after a residence of three years in Venice, Byron removed to Ravenna. His first visit to that city had been made in the preceding spring, on which occasion he had written the beautiful "Stanzas to the Po," beginning:

> *"River, that rollest by the ancient walls*
> *Where dwells the lady of my love."*

Of this lady, Countess Teresa Guiccioli, and of this visit and the distinguished attentions paid to him as guest by the lady's husband, Count Guiccioli, we have heard already through Byron's letter (p. 134). We have had, also, the letter written from Bologna on the way home (p. 136), urgently soliciting, as a great favor to himself, the good offices of John Murray in securing for the Count the position of Vice-Consul at Ravenna.

Letters which are now to follow show, as might be expected, that the relations between the two men soon become strained, leading speedily to open enmity and finally to a separation between the Count and Countess Guiccioli. Divorce being impossible in Italy,

and appeal to the courts out of the question since, so Byron writes, "in this country the very courts hold such proofs in abhorrence, the Italians being as much more delicate in public than the English as they are more passionate in private," — the separation was effected by an appeal to the Pope. The papal decree dictated that the Countess thereafter should live either under her father's roof or in a convent. Naturally, she chose the former, and in the midsummer of 1820 Madame Guiccioli left Ravenna, and retired to a villa belonging to her father, Count Gamba, about fifteen miles from the city. Byron continued to rent a portion of the Guiccioli palace in Ravenna from Count Guiccioli. Henceforward, for the remainder of Byron's life, his plans were shaped largely by the movements and fortunes of the Gamba family. They, like Byron himself, were ardent revolutionists; when this movement failed, and the Gambas — father, son, and daughter — were exiled from Romagna, Byron also withdrew, and soon all were under the same roof at Pisa; when, in turn, a year later, the Gambas were banished also from Tuscany as they had been from Romagna, Byron followed their fortunes to Liguria. Between Byron and Pietro Gamba, the son, a devoted friendship existed, terminated only by death; for Pietro joined Byron on his expedition to Greece, and stood at his bedside during his last moments.

During these years Italy was in a state of tremendous political ferment. His letters are full of

tales of duels, riots, imprisonments, murders secret and open; and Byron, never deficient in physical courage, plainly enjoyed the excitement, and not infrequently took a hand himself.

Moreover, these things seemed to stimulate rather than stifle his literary activity, for during these two years he wrote the fifth canto of "Don Juan," five dramas, — "Marino Faliero," "Sardanapalus," "The Two Foscari," "Cain," "Heaven and Earth," — and the satires "Vision of Judgment" and "The Blues." In the second year of the Ravenna residence, Shelley visited Byron, and reports that he finds him "immersed in politics and literature, greatly improved in every respect . . . in genius, in temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness," compared with the previous visit at Venice three years before. "He is quite cured of his gross habits, as far as habits; the perverse ideas on which they were formed are not yet eradicated." The two men held long after-dinner talks, lasting sometimes until morning, in which they discussed personal plans, politics, literature, and criticised each other's respective works. Byron was silent as to "Adonais," loud in praise of "Prometheus Unbound," and in censure of "The Cenci"; Shelley, cool towards "Marino Faliero," but enthusiastic over "Don Juan." Even Byron himself must have been satisfied with Shelley's praise of the new Canto V, of which he says "every word has the stamp of immortality."

At Shelley's urgency, Byron agreed to give up his plan of joining the Gambas in Switzerland, and to remain in Italy if they too would consent. By Shelley's mediation this consent was gained, Shelley undertaking to find a house for them at Pisa, where he was himself living. Another result of the visit was the invitation to Leigh Hunt, conveyed in a letter from Shelley, to come to Pisa and "go shares" with Byron and himself in a periodical to be published there, in which each of the contracting parties should publish all his original compositions and share the profits. This is the first definite step towards the actual embodiment of Byron's long-cherished idea of a review of his own for the publication of his own works, which later took shape in the ill-starred "Liberal."

The incidents of the Ravenna life are exhibited very fully by Byron himself in a "Diary" and a book of "Detached Thoughts." In these comes the announcement (February 24, 1821) of the failure of the revolutionary movement, and "thus the Italians are always lost for lack of union among themselves." And again (May 1, 1821), "Some day or other, if dust holds together, I have been enough in the secret (at least in this part of the country) to cast perhaps some little light upon the atrocious treachery which has replunged Italy into barbarism. . . . Come what may, the cause was a glorious one, though it reads at present as if the Greeks had run away from Xerxes."

STANZAS TO THE PO

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me;

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

What do I say — a mirror of my heart?
Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
And such as thou art were my passions long.

Time may have somewhat tamed them, — not for ever;
Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away —

But left long wrecks behind: and now again,
Borne in our old unchanged career, we move;
Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main.
And I — to loving *one* I should not love.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
Her native walls and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
The twilight air, unharm'd by summer's heat.

She will look on thee, — I have look'd on thee,
Full of that thought; and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
Without the inseparable sigh for her!

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream, —
Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
That happy wave repass me in its flow!

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep? —
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
As various as the climates of our birth.

A stranger loves the lady of the land,
Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Is all meridian, as if never fann'd
By the black wind that chills the polar flood.

My blood is all meridian; were it not,
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot,
A slave again of love, — at least of thee.

PALAZZO Guiccioli at Ravenna.

Byron's residence in 1820 and 1821

'T is vain to struggle — let me perish young —
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

June 1819. [First published, 1824.]

TO THOMAS MOORE

January 2, 1820.

. . . . . .

For my own part, I had a sad scene since you went. Count Gu. came for his wife, and *none* of those consequences which Scott prophesied ensued. There was no damages, as in England, and so Scott lost his wager. But there was a great scene, for she would not, at first, go back with him — at last, she *did* go back with him; but he insisted, reasonably enough, that all communication should be broken off between her and me. So, finding Italy very dull, and having a fever tertian, I packed up my valise, and prepared to cross the Alps; but my daughter fell ill, and detained me.

After her arrival at Ravenna, the Guiccioli fell ill again too; and at last, her father (who had, all along, opposed the *liaison* most violently till now) wrote to me to say that she was in such a state that *he* begged me to come and see her, — and that her husband had acquiesced, in consequence of her relapse, and that *he* (her father) would guarantee all this, and that there would be no further scenes in consequence between them, and that I should not be compromised in any way. I set out soon after, and have been

here ever since. I found her a good deal altered, but getting better: *all* this comes of reading *Corinna*.[1]

The Carnival is about to begin, and I saw about two or three hundred people at the Marquis Cavalli's the other evening, with as much youth, beauty, and diamonds among the women, as ever averaged in the like number. My appearance in waiting on the Guiccioli was considered as a thing of course. The Marquis is her uncle, and naturally considered me as her relation.

The paper is out, and so is the letter. Pray write. Address to Venice, whence the letters will be forwarded.

Yours, etc.,

B.

TO RICHARD BELGRAVE HOPPNER

RAVENNA, January 20, 1820.

. . . . . .

I have not decided anything about remaining at Ravenna. I may stay a day, a week, a year, all my life; but all this depends upon what I can neither see nor foresee. I came because I was called, and will go the moment that I perceive what may render my departure proper. My attachment has neither the blindness of the beginning, nor the microscopic accuracy of the close to such *liaisons;* but "time and the hour" must decide upon what I do. I can as yet say nothing, because I hardly know anything beyond what I have told you.

I wrote to you last post for my moveables, as there is

[1] Byron and Teresa had read "Corinne" together on the occasion of his visit the preceding summer.

no getting a lodging with a chair or table here ready; and as I have already some things of the sort at Bologna, I have directed them to be moved; and wish the like to be done with those of Venice, that I may at least get out of the *Albergo Imperiale*, which *is imperial* in all true sense of the epithet. . . .

The snow is a foot deep here. There is a theatre, and opera, — the *Barber of Seville*. Balls begin on Monday next. Pay the porter for never looking after the gate, and ship my chattels, and let me know, or let Castelli let me know, how my lawsuits go on — but fee him only in proportion to his success. Perhaps we may meet in the spring yet, if you are for England. I see Hobhouse has got into a scrape, which does not please me; he should not have gone so deep among those men without calculating the consequences. I used to think myself the most imprudent of all among my friends and acquaintances, but almost begin to doubt it.

Yours, etc.

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, February 21, 1820.

. . . . . .

I have finished my translation of the first Canto of the "*Morgante Maggiore*" of Pulci, which I will transcribe and send: it is the parent, not only of *Whistlecraft*, but of all jocose Italian poetry.[1] You must print it side by side with the original Italian, because I wish the reader to

[1] Compare "Don Juan," Canto IV, stanza vi., p. 232.

judge of the fidelity: it is stanza for stanza, and often line for line, if not word for word.

You ask me for a volume of manners, etc., on Italy: perhaps I am in the case to know more of them than most Englishmen, because I have lived among the natives, and in parts of the country where Englishmen never resided before (I speak of Romagna and this place particularly); but there are many reasons why I do not choose to touch in print on such a subject. I have lived in their houses and in the heart of their families, sometimes merely as "*amico di casa*" and sometimes as "*amico di cuore*" of the *Dama*, and in neither case do I feel myself authorized in making a book of them. Their moral is not your moral; their life is not your life; you would not understand it: it is not English, nor French, nor German, which you would all understand. The Conventual education, the Cavalier Servitude, the habits of thought and living are so entirely different, and the difference becomes so much more striking the more you live intimately with them, that I know not how to make you comprehend a people, who are at once temperate and profligate, serious in their character and buffoons in their amusements, capable of impressions and passions, which are at once *sudden* and *durable* (what you find in no other nation), and who actually have *no society* (what we would call so), as you may see by their Comedies: they have no real comedy, not even in Goldoni; and that is because they have no Society to draw it from.

Their Conversazioni are not Society at all. They go to the theatre to talk, and into company to hold their tongues. The *women* sit in a circle, and the men gather into

groups, or they play at dreary *Faro* or "*Lotto reale*," for small sums. Their Academie are Concerts like our own, with better music and more form. Their best things are the Carnival balls and masquerades, when everybody runs mad for six weeks. After their dinners and suppers, they make extempore verses and buffoon one another; but it is in a humour which you would not enter into, ye of the North.

In their houses it is better. I should know something of the matter, having had a pretty general experience among their women, from the fisherman's wife up to the *Nobil' Donna*, whom I serve. Their system has its rules, and its fitnesses, and decorums, so as to be reduced to a kind of discipline or game at hearts, which admits few deviations, unless you wish to lose it. They are extremely tenacious, and jealous as furies; not permitting their lovers even to marry if they can help it, and keeping them always close to them in public as in private whenever they can. In short, they transfer marriage to adultery, and strike the *not* out of that commandment. The reason is, that they marry for their parents, and love for themselves. They exact fidelity from a lover as a debt of honour, while they pay the husband as a tradesman, that is, not at all. You hear a person's character, male or female, canvassed, not as depending on their conduct to their husbands or wives, but to their mistress or lover. And — and — that 's all. If I wrote a quarto, I don't know that I could do more than amplify what I have here noted. It is to be observed that while they do all this, the greatest outward respect is to be paid to the husbands, not only by the ladies, but by their

Serventi — particularly if the husband serves no one himself (which is not often the case, however): so that you would often suppose them relations — the *Servente* making the figure of one adopted into the family. Sometimes the ladies run a little restive and elope, or divide, or make a scene; but this is at starting, generally, when they know no better, or when they fall in love with a foreigner, or some such anomaly, — and is always reckoned unnecessary and extravagant.

You enquire after "Dante's Prophecy": I have not done more than six hundred lines, but will vaticinate at leisure.

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

'T is the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.

CAMPBELL.

DEDICATION

LADY![1] if for the cold and cloudy clime
Where I was born, but where I would not die,
Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy
I dare to build the imitative rhyme,
Harsh Runic copy of the South's sublime,
THOU art the cause; and howsoever I
Fall short of his immortal harmony,
Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.
Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,
Spakest; and for thee to speak and be obey'd

[1] Teresa Guiccioli.

TOMB of Dante at Ravenna.

"*Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,*
Fortress of falling empire, honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lix, p. 73.

Are one; but only in the sunny South
Such sounds are utter'd, and such charms display'd,
So sweet a language from so fair a mouth —
Ah! to what effort would it not persuade?

RAVENNA, June 21, 1819.

PREFACE

In the course of a visit to the city of Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he should do the same on Dante's exile, — the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city, both to the native and to the stranger.

"On this hint I spake," and the result has been the following four cantos, in terza rima, now offered to the reader. If they are understood and approved, it is my purpose to continue the poem in various other cantos to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the *Divina Commedia* and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan I have had in my mind the *Cassandra* of Lycophron, and the Prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the Prophecies of Holy Writ. The measure adopted is the terza rima of Dante, which I am not aware to have seen hitherto tried in our language, except it may be by Mr. Hayley, of whose translation I never saw but one extract, quoted in the notes to *Caliph Vathek;* so that — if I do not err — this poem may be considered as a

metrical experiment. The cantos are short, and about the same length of those of the poet whose name I have borrowed, and most probably taken in vain.

Amongst the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* translated into Italian *versi sciolti*, — that is, a poem written in the *Spenserean stanza* into *blank verse*, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza or of the sense. If the present poem, being on a national topic, should chance to undergo the same fate, I would request the Italian reader to remember that when I have failed in the imitation of his great "Padre Alighier," I have failed in imitating that which all study and few understand, since to this very day it is not yet settled what was the meaning of the allegory in the first canto of the *Inferno*, unless Count Marchetti's ingenious and probable conjecture may be considered as having decided the question.

He may also pardon my failure the more, as I am not quite sure that he would be pleased with my success, since the Italians, with a pardonable nationality, are particularly jealous of all that is left them as a nation — their literature; and in the present bitterness of the classic and romantic war, are but ill-disposed to permit a foreigner even to approve or imitate them, without finding some fault with his ultramontane presumption. I can easily enter into all this, knowing what would be thought in England of an Italian imitator of Milton, or if a translation of Monti, or Pindemonte, or Arici, should be held up

to the rising generation as a model for their future poetical essays. But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

CANTO THE FIRST

Once more in man's frail world! which I had left
So long that 't was forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again, — too soon bereft
Of the immortal vision which could heal
My earthly sorrows, and to God's own skies
Lift me from that deep gulf without repeal,
Where late my ears rung with the damnèd cries
Of souls in hopeless bale; and from that place
Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the angelic race;
Midst whom my own bright Beatricë bless'd
My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the eternal Triad, — first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great God!
Soul universal! — led the mortal guest
Unblasted by the glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty throne.
O Beatricë! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath press'd and the cold marble stone,
Thou sole pure seraph of my earliest love,
Love so ineffable and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my bosom move,
And meeting thee in heaven was but to meet

That without which my soul, like the arkless dove,
Had wander'd still in search of, nor her feet
Relieved her wing till found, — without thy light
My paradise had still been incomplete.
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my sight
Thou wert my life, the essence of my thought,
Loved ere I knew the name of love, and bright
Still in these dim old eyes, now overwrought
With the world's war and years and banishment
And tears for thee, by other woes untaught;
For mine is not a nature to be bent
By tyrannous faction and the brawling crowd,
And though the long, long conflict hath been spent
In vain, and never more (save when the cloud
Which overhangs the Apennine, my mind's eye
Pierces to fancy Florence, once so proud
Of me) can I return, though but to die,
Unto my native soil, — they have not yet
Quench'd the old exile's spirit, stern and high.
But the sun, though not overcast, must set,
And the night cometh; I am old in days,
And deeds, and contemplation, and have met
Destruction face to face in all his ways.
The world hath left me, what it found me, pure,
And if I have not gather'd yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure.
Man wrongs, and Time avenges, and my name
May form a monument not all obscure
(Though such was not my ambition's end or aim),
To add to the vain-glorious list of those

Who dabble in the pettiness of fame,
And make men's fickle breath the wind that blows
Their sail, and deem it glory to be class'd
With conquerors and virtue's other foes
In bloody chronicles of ages past.
I would have had my Florence great and free:
O Florence! Florence! unto me thou wast
Like that Jerusalem which the almighty He
Wept over, 'but thou wouldst not!' As the bird
Gathers its young, I would have gather'd thee
Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and fierce,
Against the breast that cherish'd thee was stirr'd
Thy venom, and my state thou didst amerce,
And doom this body forfeit to the fire.[1]
Alas! how bitter is his country's curse
To him who *for* that country would expire,
But did not merit to expire *by* her,
And loves her, loves her even in her ire.
The day may come when she will cease to err,
The day may come she would be proud to have
The dust she dooms to scatter, and transfer
Of him, whom she denied a home, the grave.
But this shall not be granted; let my dust
Lie where it falls; nor shall the soil which gave
Me breath, but in her sudden fury thrust
Me forth to breathe elsewhere, so reassume
My indignant bones, because her angry gust

[1] In 1302, a decree was issued that Dante and his associates in exile should be burned if they fell into the hands of their enemies.

Forsooth is over and repeal'd her doom:
No, she denied me what was mine — my roof,
And shall not have what is not hers — my tomb.
Too long her armèd wrath hath kept aloof
The breast which would have bled for her, the heart
That beat, the mind that was temptation proof,
The man who fought, toil'd, travell'd, and each part
Of a true citizen fulfill'd, and saw
For his reward the Guelf's ascendant art
Pass his destruction even into a law.
These things are not made for forgetfulness,
Florence shall be forgotten first; too raw
The wound, too deep the wrong, and the distress
Of such endurance too prolong'd to make
My pardon greater, her injustice less,
Though late repented. Yet — yet for her sake
I feel some fonder yearnings, and for thine,
My own Beatricë, I would hardly take
Vengeance upon the land which once was mine,
And still is hallow'd by thy dust's return,
Which would protect the murderess like a shrine
And save ten thousand foes by thy sole urn.
Though, like old Marius[1] from Minturnæ's marsh
And Carthage ruins, my lone breast may burn
At times with evil feelings hot and harsh,
And sometimes the last pangs of a vile foe
Writhe in a dream before me and o'er-arch
My brow with hopes of triumph, — let them go!

[1] Marius, proconsul of Africa, prosecuted, fined, and banished by his province.

Such are the last infirmities of those
Who long have suffer'd more than mortal woe,
And yet, being mortal still, have no repose
But on the pillow of Revenge — Revenge,
Who sleeps to dream of blood, and waking glows
With the oft-baffled, slakeless thirst of change,
When we shall mount again, and they that trod
Be trampled on, while Death and Atë range
O'er humbled heads and sever'd necks. — Great God!
Take these thoughts from me; to thy hands I yield
My many wrongs, and thine almighty rod
Will fall on those who smote me, — be my shield!
As thou hast been in peril, and in pain,
In turbulent cities, and the tented field,
In toil, and many troubles borne in vain
For Florence. I appeal from her to Thee!
Thee, whom I late saw in thy loftiest reign,
Even in that glorious vision, which to see
And live was never granted until now,
And yet thou hast permitted this to me.
Alas! with what a weight upon my brow
The sense of earth and earthly things come back,
Corrosive passions, feelings dull and low,
The heart's quick throb upon the mental rack,
Long day, and dreary night; the retrospect
Of half a century bloody and black,
And the frail few years I may yet expect
Hoary and hopeless, but less hard to bear,
For I have been too long and deeply wreck'd
On the lone rock of desolate Despair

To lift my eyes more to the passing sail
Which shuns that reef so horrible and bare;
Nor raise my voice — for who would heed my wail?
I am not of this people nor this age,
And yet my harpings will unfold a tale
Which shall preserve these times when not a page
Of their perturbèd annals could attract
An eye to gaze upon their civil rage,
Did not my verse embalm full many an act
Worthless as they who wrought it. 'T is the doom
Of spirits of my order to be rack'd
In life, to wear their hearts out, and consume
Their days in endless strife, and die alone;
Then future thousands crowd around their tomb,
And pilgrims come from climes where they have known
The name of him, who now is but a name,
And wasting homage o'er the sullen stone,
Spread his — by him unheard, unheeded — fame.
And mine at least hath cost me dear: to die
Is nothing; but to wither thus, to tame
My mind down from its own infinity,
To live in narrow ways with little men,
A common sight to every common eye,
A wanderer, while even wolves can find a den,
Ripp'd from all kindred, from all home, all things
That make communion sweet, and soften pain —
To feel me in the solitude of kings
Without the power that makes them bear a crown,
To envy every dove his nest and wings
Which waft him where the Apennine looks down

GROUP of olive Trees.

" Thou, Italy! so fair that Paradise,
Revived in thee, blooms forth to man restored."
— Prophecy of Dante, Canto II, p. 167.

On Arno, till he perches, it may be,
Within my all inexorable town,
Where yet my boys are, and that fatal she,[1]
Their mother, the cold partner who hath brought
Destruction for a dowry, — this to see
And feel, and know without repair, hath taught
A bitter lesson; but it leaves me free:
I have not vilely found, nor basely sought,
They made an Exile — not a slave of me.

CANTO THE SECOND

The Spirit of the fervent days of Old,
When words were things that came to pass, and thought
Flash'd o'er the future, bidding men behold
Their children's children's doom already brought
Forth from the abyss of time which is to be,
The chaos of events, where lie half-wrought
Shapes that must undergo mortality, —
What the great Seers of Israel wore within,
That spirit was on them, and is on me.
And if, Cassandra-like, amidst the din
Of conflict none will hear, or hearing heed
This voice from out the Wilderness, the sin
Be theirs, and my own feelings be my meed,
The only guerdon I have ever known.
Hast thou not bled? and hast thou still to bleed,

[1] Gemma, Dante's wife and the mother of his seven children, did not share his exile. There is a tradition, but no proof, that she had a violent temper.

Italia? Ah! to me such things, foreshown
With dim sepulchral light, bid me forget
In thine irreparable wrongs my own.
We can have but one country, and even yet
Thou 'rt mine — my bones shall be within thy breast,
My soul within thy language, which once set
With our old Roman sway in the wide West;
But I will make another tongue arise
As lofty and more sweet, in which express'd
The hero's ardour, or the lover's sighs,
Shall find alike such sounds for every theme
That every word, as brilliant as thy skies,
Shall realise a poet's proudest dream,
And make thee Europe's nightingale of song;
So that all present speech to thine shall seem
The note of meaner birds, and every tongue
Confess its barbarism when compared with thine.
This shalt thou owe to him thou didst so wrong,
Thy Tuscan Bard, the banish'd Ghibelline.
Woe! woe! the veil of coming centuries
Is rent, — a thousand years which yet supine
Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,
Heaving in dark and sullen undulation,
Float from eternity into these eyes;
The storms yet sleep, the clouds still keep their station,
The unborn earthquake yet is in the womb,
The bloody chaos yet expects creation,
But all things are disposing for thy doom;
The elements await but for the word,
'Let there be darkness!' and thou grow'st a tomb!

Yes! thou, so beautiful, shalt feel the sword;
Thou, Italy! so fair that Paradise,
Revived in thee, blooms forth to man restored:
Ah! must the sons of Adam lose it twice?
Thou, Italy! whose ever golden fields,
Plough'd by the sunbeams solely, would suffice
For the world's granary; thou, whose sky heaven gilds
With brighter stars, and robes with deeper blue;
Thou, in whose pleasant places Summer builds
Her palace, in whose cradle Empire grew,
And form'd the Eternal City's ornaments
From spoils of kings whom freemen overthrew;
Birthplace of heroes, sanctuary of saints,
Where earthly first, then heavenly glory made
Her home; thou, all which fondest fancy paints,
And finds her prior vision but portray'd
In feeble colours, when the eye — from the Alp
Of horrid snow, and rock, and shaggy shade
Of desert-loving pine, whose emerald scalp
Nods to the storm — dilates and dotes o'er thee,
And wistfully implores, as 't were, for help
To see thy sunny fields, my Italy,
Nearer and nearer yet, and dearer still
The more approach'd, and dearest were they free;
Thou — thou must wither to each tyrant's will.
The Goth hath been, the German, Frank, and Hun
Are yet to come; and on the imperial hill
Ruin, already proud of the deeds done
By the old barbarians, there awaits the new,
Throned on the Palatine, while lost and won

Rome at her feet lies bleeding; and the hue
Of human sacrifice and Roman slaughter
Troubles the clotted air, of late so blue,
And deepens into red the saffron water
Of Tiber, thick with dead. The helpless priest,
And still more helpless nor less holy daughter,
Vow'd to their God, have shrieking fled, and ceased
Their ministry. The nations take their prey,
Iberian, Almain, Lombard, and the beast
And bird, wolf, vulture, more humane than they
Are; these but gorge the flesh and lap the gore
Of the departed, and then go their way;
But those, the human savages, explore
All paths of torture, and insatiate yet,
With Ugolino-hunger prowl for more.
Nine moons shall rise o'er scenes like this and set;[1]
The chiefless army of the dead, which late
Beneath the traitor Prince's banner met,
Hath left its leader's ashes at the gate;
Had but the royal Rebel lived, perchance
Thou hadst been spared, but his involved thy fate.
Oh! Rome, the spoiler or the spoil of France,
From Brennus to the Bourbon, never, never
Shall foreign standard to thy walls advance
But Tiber shall become a mournful river.
Oh! when the strangers pass the Alps and Po,
Crush them, ye rocks! floods whelm them, and for ever!

[1] Referring to the siege and capture of Rome by the Constable of Bourbon, who himself perished in the assault.

Why sleep the idle avalanches so,
To topple on the lonely pilgrim's head?
Why doth Eridanus but overflow
The peasant's harvest from his turbid bed?
Were not each barbarous horde a nobler prey?
Over Cambyses' host the desert spread
Her sandy ocean, and the sea waves' sway
Roll'd over Pharaoh and his thousands, — why,
Mountains and waters, do ye not as they?
And you, ye men! Romans, who dare not die,
Sons of the conquerors who overthrew
Those who o'erthrew proud Xerxes, where yet lie
The dead whose tomb Oblivion never knew,
Are the Alps weaker than Thermopylæ?
Their passes more alluring to the view
Of an invader? is it they, or ye,
That to each host the mountain-gate unbar,
And leave the march in peace, the passage free?
Why, Nature's self detains the victor's car,
And makes your land impregnable, if earth
Could be so; but alone she will not war,
Yet aids the warrior worthy of his birth
In a soil where the mothers bring forth men:
Not so with those whose souls are little worth;
For them no fortress can avail, — the den
Of the poor reptile which preserves its sting
Is more secure than walls of adamant, when
The hearts of those within are quivering.
Are ye not brave? Yes, yet the Ausonian soil
Hath hearts, and hands, and arms, and hosts to bring

Against Oppression; but how vain the toil,
While still Division sows the seeds of woe
And weakness, till the stranger reaps the spoil.
Oh! my own beauteous land! so long laid low,
So long the grave of thy own children's hopes,
When there is but required a single blow
To break the chain, yet — yet the Avenger stops,
And Doubt and Discord step 'twixt thine and thee,
And join their strength to that which with thee copes;
What is there wanting then to set thee free,
And show thy beauty in its fullest light?
To make the Alps impassable; and we,
Her sons, may do this with *one* deed — Unite.

. . . . . .

CANTO THE FOURTH

MANY are poets who have never penn'd
Their inspiration, and perchance the best:
They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
Their thoughts to meaner beings; they compress'd
The god within them, and rejoin'd the stars
Unlaurell'd upon earth, but far more bless'd
Than those who are degraded by the jars
Of passion, and their frailties link'd to fame,
Conquerors of high renown but full of scars.
Many are poets but without the name,
For what is poesy but to create
From overfeeling good or ill; and aim
At an external life beyond our fate,
And be the new Prometheus of new men,

Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late,
Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain
And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
Who, having lavish'd his high gift in vain,
Lies chain'd to his lone rock by the seashore?
So be it: we can bear. — But thus all they
Whose intellect is an o'ermastering power
Which still recoils from its encumbering clay
Or lightens it to spirit, whatsoe'er
The form which their creations may essay,
Are bards; the kindled marble's bust may wear
More poesy upon its speaking brow
Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear.
One noble stroke with a whole life may glow,
Or deify the canvas till it shine
With beauty so surpassing all below,
That they who kneel to idols so divine
Break no commandment, for high heaven is there
Transfused, transfigurated; and the line
Of poesy, which peoples but the air
With thought and beings of our thought reflected,
Can do no more. Then let the artist share
The palm, he shares the peril, and dejected
Faints o'er the labour unapproved — Alas!
Despair and Genius are too oft connected.
Within the ages which before me pass
Art shall resume and equal even the sway
Which with Apelles and old Phidias
She held in Hellas' unforgotten day.
Ye shall be taught by Ruin to revive

The Grecian forms at least from their decay;
And Roman souls at last again shall live
In Roman works wrought by Italian hands;
And temples, loftier than the old temples, give
New wonders to the world; and while still stands
The austere Pantheon, into heaven shall soar
A dome, its image, while the base expands
Into a fane surpassing all before,
Such as all flesh shall flock to kneel in: ne'er
Such sight hath been unfolded by a door
As this, to which all nations shall repair,
And lay their sins at this huge gate of heaven.
And the bold Architect unto whose care
The daring charge to raise it shall be given,
Whom all arts shall acknowledge as their lord,
Whether into the marble chaos driven
His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
Israel left Egypt, stop the waves in stone,
Or hues of Hell be by his pencil pour'd
Over the damn'd before the Judgment-throne,
Such as I saw them, such as all shall see,
Or fanes be built of grandeur yet unknown,—
The stream of his great thoughts shall spring from me,[1]
The Ghibelline, who traversed the three realms
Which form the empire of eternity.
Amidst the clash of swords and clang of helms,

[1] The inspiration received from Dante by Michel Angelo is to be seen plainly in his treatment of the Last Judgment and of the Brazen Serpent in the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

"THE Last Judgment," in Sistine Chapel, Rome, by Michel Angelo.

"Hues of Hell be by his pencil pour'd
Over the damn'd before the Judgment-throne."
— The Prophecy of Dante, Canto IV, p. 172.

The age which I anticipate, no less
Shall be the Age of Beauty; and while whelms
Calamity the nations with distress,
The genius of my country shall arise,
A cedar towering o'er the Wilderness,
Lovely in all its branches to all eyes,
Fragrant as fair, and recognised afar,
Wafting its native incense through the skies.
Sovereigns shall pause amidst their sport of war,
Wean'd for an hour from blood, to turn and gaze
On canvas or on stone; and they who mar
All beauty upon earth, compell'd to praise,
Shall feel the power of that which they destroy;
And Art's mistaken gratitude shall raise
To tyrants who but take her for a toy
Emblems and monuments, and prostitute
Her charms to pontiffs proud, who but employ
The man of genius as the meanest brute[1]
To bear a burthen and to serve a need,
To sell his labours and his soul to boot.
Who toils for nations may be poor indeed,
But free; who sweats for monarchs is no more
Than the gilt chamberlain, who, clothed and fee'd,
Stands sleek and slavish, bowing at his door.
Oh, Power that rulest and inspirest! how
Is it that they on earth, whose earthly power
Is likest thine in heaven in outward show,
Least like to thee in attributes divine,
Tread on the universal necks that bow,

[1] Alluding to Julius II and Leo X and their treatment of Michel Angelo.

And then assure us that their rights are thine?
And how is it that they, the sons of fame,
Whose inspiration seems to them to shine
From high, they whom the nations oftest name,
Must pass their days in penury or pain,
Or step to grandeur through the paths of shame,
And wear a deeper brand and gaudier chain?
Or if their destiny be born aloof
From lowliness, or tempted thence in vain,
In their own souls sustain a harder proof,
The inner war of passions deep and fierce?
Florence! when thy harsh sentence razed my roof,
I loved thee; but the vengeance of my verse,
The hate of injuries which every year
Makes greater, and accumulates my curse,
Shall live, outliving all thou holdest dear —
Thy pride, thy wealth, thy freedom, and even *that*,
The most infernal of all evils here,
The sway of petty tyrants in a state;
For such sway is not limited to kings,
And demagogues yield to them but in date,
As swept off sooner; in all deadly things
Which make men hate themselves and one another,
In discord, cowardice, cruelty, all that springs
From Death the Sin-born's incest with his mother,
In rank oppression in its rudest shape,
The faction Chief is but the Sultan's brother,
And the worst despot's far less human ape: —
Florence! when this lone spirit, which so long
Yearn'd, as the captive toiling at escape,

To fly back to thee in despite of wrong,
An exile, saddest of all prisoners,
Who has the whole world for a dungeon strong,
Seas, mountains, and the horizon's verge for bars,
Which shut him from the sole small spot of earth
Where — whatsoe'er his fate — he still were hers,
His country's, and might die where he had birth —
Florence! when this lone spirit shall return
To kindred spirits, thou wilt feel my worth,
And seek to honour with an empty urn
The ashes thou shalt ne'er obtain — Alas!
"What have I done to thee, my people?"[1] Stern
Are all thy dealings, but in this they pass
The limits of man's common malice, for
All that a citizen could be I was;
Raised by thy will, all thine in peace or war,
And for this thou hast warr'd with me. — 'T is done:
I may not overleap the eternal bar
Built up between us, and will die alone,
Beholding with the dark eye of a seer
The evil days to gifted souls foreshown,
Foretelling them to those who will not hear,
As in the old time, till the hour be come
When Truth shall strike their eyes through many a tear,
And make them own the Prophet in his tomb.[2]

[1] The beginning of one of Dante's letters to the people of Florence.

[2] This hour came very soon after Dante's death, when the city of Florence begged for Dante's remains to be buried there. But Ravenna refused, and Dante's tomb is one of Ravenna's chief prides.

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, March 20, 1820.

DR MURRAY, — Last post I sent you *The Vision of Dante*, — four first cantos. Enclosed you will find, *line for line*, in *third rhyme* (*terza rima*), of which your British Blackguard reader as yet understands nothing, *Fanny of Rimini*. You know that she was born here, and married, and slain, from Cary, Boyd, and such people already. I have done it into *cramp* English, line for line, and rhyme for rhyme, to try the possibility. You had best append it to the poems already sent by last three posts. I shall not allow you to play the tricks you did last year, with the prose you *post*-scribed to *Mazeppa*, which I sent to you *not* to be published, if not in a periodical paper, — and there you tacked it, without a word of explanation and be damned to you. If this is published, publish it *with the original*, and *together* with the *Pulci* translation, *or* the *Dante Imitation*. I suppose you have both by now, and the *Juan* long before.

Yours,

B.

"FRANCESCA OF RIMINI

"Translation from the Inferno of Dante, Canto 5th

"'THE Land where I was born sits by the Seas,
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.

Love, who to none beloved to love again
  Remits, seized me with wish to please, so strong,
  That, as thou see'st, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along,
  But Caina waits for him our life who ended':
  These were the accents utter'd by her tongue. —
Since I first listened to these Souls offended,
  I bow'd my visage and so kept it till —
'What think'st thou?' said the bard; { *then* / when } I unbended,
And recommenced: 'Alas! unto such ill
  How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies
  Led these their evil fortune to fulfill!'
And then I turned unto their side my eyes,
  And said, 'Francesca, thy sad destinies
  Have made me sorrow till the tears arise.
But tell me, in the Season of sweet sighs,
  By what and how thy Love to Passion rose,
  So as his dim desires to recognise?'
Then she to me: 'The greatest of all woes
  Is to { *recall to mind* / remind us of } our happy days
  In misery, and { *this* / that } thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
  Upon thy spirit with such Sympathy,
  I will { *relate* / do[1] even } as he who weeps and says. —

[1] "In some of the editions it is 'diro,' in others 'faro'; — an essential difference between 'saying' and 'doing,' which I know not how to

We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancilot, how love enchained him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspiciously,
But oft our eyes met, and our Cheeks in hue
All o'er discolour'd by that reading were;
But one point only wholly { *overthrew* / us o'erthrew; }
When we read the { *desired* / long-sighed-for } smile of her,
To be thus kist by such { *a fervent* / devoted } lover,
He, who from me can be divided ne'er,
Kissed my mouth, trembling in the act all over.
Accursed was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf we did uncover.' —
While thus one Spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with pity's thralls
I swoon'd as if by death I had been smote,
And fell down even as a dead body falls."

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, April 9, 1820.

D^R S^R, — In the name of all the devils in — the printing office, why don't you write to acknowledge the receipt of the second, third, and fourth packets, viz., the Pulci — translation and original, the *Danticles*, the *Observations on*, etc.? You forget that you keep me in hot water till I

decide. Ask Foscolo. The d——d editions drive me mad." (Byron's Note.)

know whether they are arrived, or if I must have the bore of recopying.

I send you "A Song of Triumph" by W. Botherby, Esqre, price sixpence, on the Election of J. C. H., Esqre, for Westminster (*not* for publication);

> Would you go to the House by the true gate,
> Much faster than ever Whig Charley went;
> Let Parliament send you to Newgate,
> And Newgate will send you to Parliament.

Have you gotten the cream of translations, *Francesca of Rimini*, from the *Inferno?* Why, I have sent you a warehouse of trash within the last month, and you have no sort of feeling about you: a pastry-cook would have had twice the gratitude, and thanked me at least for the quantity.

P. S. — I have begun a tragedy on the subject of Marino Faliero, the Doge of Venice; but you shan't see it these six years, if you don't acknowledge my packets with more quickness and precision. *Always write, if but a line*, by return of post, when anything arrives, which is not a mere letter.

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, April 23, 1820.

DEAR MURRAY, — The proofs don't contain the last stanzas of Canto second, but end abruptly with the 105th Stanza.

I told you long ago that the new Cantos[1] were *not* good, and I also *told you a reason:* recollect, I do not oblige you to publish them; you may suppress them, if you like, but I can alter nothing. I have erased the six stanzas about those two impostors, Southey and Wordsworth (which I suppose will give you great pleasure), but I can do no more. I can neither recast, nor replace; but I give you leave to put it all into the fire, if you like, or *not* to publish, and I think that 's sufficient.

I told you that I wrote on with no good will — that I had been, *not* frightened, but *hurt,* by the outcry, and, besides that, when I wrote last November, I was ill in body, and in very great distress of mind about some private things of my own; but *you would* have it: so I sent it to you, and to make it lighter, *cut* it in two — but I can't piece it together again. I can't cobble: I must "either make a spoon or spoil a horn," — and there 's an end; for there 's no remeid: but I leave you free will to suppress the *whole,* if you like it.

About the *Morgante Maggiore, I won't have a line omitted:* it may circulate, or it may not; but all the Criticism on earth shan't touch a line, unless it be because it is *badly* translated. Now you say, and I say, and others say, that the translation is a good one; and so it shall go to press as it is. Pulci must answer for his own irreligion: I answer for the translation only. . . .

My love to Scott. I shall think higher of knighthood ever after for his being dubbed. By the way, he is the first poet titled for his talent in Britain: it has happened

[1] "Don Juan," Cantos III, IV.

STATUE of Moses in San Pietro, in Vincoli, Rome. Designed by Michel Angelo.

" Into the marble chaos driven
His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
Israel left Egypt."

— Prophecy of Dante, Canto IV, p. 172.

abroad before now; but on the continent titles are universal and worthless. Why don't you send me *Ivanhoe* and the *Monastery?* I have never written to Sir Walter, for I know he has a thousand things, and I a thousand nothings, to do; but I hope to see him at Abbotsford before very long, and I will sweat his Claret for him, though Italian abstemiousness has made my brain but a shilpit[1] concern for a Scotch sitting *inter pocula*. I love Scott and Moore, and all the better brethren; but I hate and abhor that puddle of waterworms whom you have taken into your troop in the *history* line I see. I am obliged to end abruptly.

Yours,

B.

P. S. — You say that *one half*[2] is very good: you are *wrong;* for, if it were, it would be the finest poem in existence. *Where* is the poetry of which *one half* is good? is it the *Æneid?* is it *Milton's?* is it *Dryden's?* is it any one's except *Pope's* and *Goldsmith's*, of which *all* is good? and yet these two last are the poets your pond poets would explode. But if *one half* of the two new Cantos be good in your opinion, what the devil would you have more? No — no: no poetry is *generally* good — only by fits and starts — and you are lucky to get a sparkle here and there. You might as well want a Midnight *all stars* as rhyme all perfect.

[1] Balmawhapple, carousing at Luckie Macleary's, and fortified by the Bear and the Hen, "pronounced the claret *shilpit*, and demanded brandy with great vociferation" (*Waverley*, Chap. xi).

[2] Of "Don Juan."

TO THOMAS MOORE

RAVENNA, August 31, 1820.

. . . . . .

I verily believe that nor you, nor any man of poetical temperament, can avoid a strong passion of some kind. It is the poetry of life. What should I have known or written, had I been a quiet, mercantile politician, or a lord in waiting? A man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence. Besides, I only meant to be a Cavalier Servente, and had no idea it would turn out a romance, in the Anglo fashion.

However, I suspect I know a thing or two of Italy — more than Lady Morgan has picked up in her posting. What do Englishmen know of Italians beyond their museums and saloons — and some hack . . . *en passant?* Now, I have lived in the heart of their houses, in parts of Italy freshest and least influenced by strangers, — have seen and become (*pars magna fui*) a portion of their hopes, and fears, and passions, and am almost inoculated into a family. This is to see men and things as they are.

You say that I called you "quiet" — I don't recollect anything of the sort. On the contrary, you are always in scrapes.

FROM BYRON'S DIARY

January 29, 1821.

. . . . . .

Read Schlegel. Of Dante he says, "that at no time has the greatest and most national of all Italian poets ever

been much the favourite of his countrymen." 'T is false! There have been more editors and commentators (and imitators, ultimately) of Dante than of all their poets put together. *Not* a favourite! Why, they talk Dante — write Dante — and think and dream Dante at this moment (1821) to an excess, which would be ridiculous, but that he deserves it.

In the same style this German talks of gondolas on the Arno[1] — a precious fellow to dare to speak of Italy!

He says also that Dante's chief defect is a want, in a word, of gentle feelings. Of gentle feelings! — and Francesca of Rimini — and the father's feelings in Ugolino — and Beatrice — and "La Pia!" Why, there is gentleness in Dante beyond all gentleness, when he is tender. It is true that, treating of the Christian Hades, or Hell, there is not much scope or site for gentleness — but who *but* Dante could have introduced any "gentleness" at all into *Hell?* Is there any in Milton's? No — and Dante's Heaven is all love, and glory, and majesty.

One o'clock.

I have found out, however, where the German is right — it is about the *Vicar of Wakefield.* "Of all romances in miniature (and, perhaps, this is the best shape in which Romance can appear) the *Vicar of Wakefield* is, I think, the most exquisite." He *thinks!* — he might be sure. But it is very well for a Schlegel. I feel sleepy,

[1] In Lecture xi (*Lectures on the History of Literature*, p. 297), speaking of Tasso, Schlegel says, "Individual parts and episodes of his poem are frequently sung in the gondolas of the Arno and the Po."

and may as well get me to bed. To-morrow there will be fine weather.

"Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay."

February 14, 1821.

. . . . . .

Heard the particulars of the late fray at Russi, a town not far from this. It is exactly the fact of Romēo and Giulietta — *not* Romĕo, as the Barbarian writes it. Two families of *Contadini* (peasants) are at feud. At a ball, the younger part of the families forget their quarrel, and dance together. An old man of one of them enters, and reproves the young men for dancing with the females of the opposite family. The male relatives of the latter resent this. Both parties rush home and arm themselves. They meet directly, by moonlight, in the public way, and fight it out. Three are killed on the spot, and six wounded, most of them dangerously, — pretty well for two families, methinks — and all *fact*, of the last week. Another assassination has taken place at Cesenna — in all about *forty* in Romagna within the last three months. These people retain much of the middle ages.

February 18, 1821.

To-day I have had no communication with my Carbonari cronies;[1] but, in the meantime, my lower apartments are full of their bayonets, fusils, cartridges, and what not. I suppose that they consider me as a depot, to be sacrificed, in case of accidents. It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or

[1] Members of the secret society of which Byron was the leader.

what is sacrificed. It is a grand object — the very *poetry* of politics. Only think — a free Italy!!! Why, there has been nothing like it since the days of Augustus. I reckon the times of Cæsar (Julius) free; because the commotions left every body a side to take, and the parties were pretty equal at the set out. But, afterwards, it was all prætorian and legionary business — and since! — we shall see, or, at least, some will see, what card will turn up. It is best to hope, even of the hopeless. The Dutch did more than these fellows have to do, in the Seventy Years' War.

TO THOMAS MOORE

RAVENNA, January 2, 1821.

. . . . . .

With regard to our purposed Journal,[1] I will call it what you please, but it should be a newspaper, to make it *pay*. We can call it "The Harp," if you like — or anything.

I feel exactly as you do about our "art," but it comes over me in a kind of rage every now and then, like . . . , and then, if I don't write to empty my mind, I go mad. As to that regular, uninterrupted love of writing, which you describe in your friend,[2] I do not understand it. I feel it as a torture, which I must get rid of, but never as

[1] The mention of a Journal at this date shows Byron's ambition, which was finally gratified by the publication of *The Liberal* more than a year later. But Moore dropped out of the scheme in the meantime, and Shelley and Leigh Hunt took it up.

[2] Lord John Russell.

a pleasure. On the contrary, I think composition a great pain.

I wish you to think seriously of the Journal scheme — for I am as serious as one can be, in this world, about anything. As to matters here, they are high and mighty — but not for paper. It is much about the state of things betwixt Cain and Abel. There is, in fact, no law or government at all: and it is wonderful how well things go on without them. Excepting a few occasional murders, (every body killing whomsoever he pleases, and being killed, in turn, by a friend, or relative, of the defunct,) there is as quiet a society and as merry a Carnival as can be met with in a tour through Europe. There is nothing like habit in these things.

I shall remain here till May or June, and, unless "honour comes unlooked for," we may perhaps meet, in France or England, within the year.

Yours, etc.

Of course, I cannot explain to you existing circumstances, as they open all letters.

TO THOMAS MOORE

RAVENNA, July 5, 1821.

. . . . . .

I have had a friend of your Mr. Irving's — a very pretty lad — a Mr. Coolidge, of Boston — only somewhat too full of poesy and "entusymusy." I was very civil to him during his few hours' stay, and talked with him much of Irving, whose writings are my delight. But I suspect

that he did not take quite so much to me, from his having expected to meet a misanthropical gentleman, in wolf-skin breeches, and answering in fierce monosyllables, instead of a man of this world. I can never get people to understand that poetry is the expression of *excited passion*, and that there is no such thing as a life of passion any more than a continuous earthquake, or an eternal fever. Besides, who would ever *shave* themselves in such a state?

I have had a curious letter to-day from a girl in England (I never saw her), who says she is given over of a decline, but could not go out of the world without thanking me for the delight which my poesy for several years, etc., etc., etc. It is signed simply N. N. A. and has not a word of "cant" or preachment in it upon *any* opinions. She merely says that she is dying, and that as I had contributed so highly to her existing pleasure, she thought that she might say so, begging me to *burn* her *letter* — which, by the way, I can *not* do, as I look upon such a letter in such circumstances as better than a diploma from Gottingen. I once had a letter from Drontheim in *Norway* (but not from a dying woman), in verse, on the same score of gratulation. These are the things which make one at times believe one's self a poet. But if I must believe that . . ., and such fellows, are poets also, it is better to be out of the corps.

I am now in the fifth act of *Foscari*, being the third tragedy in twelve months, besides *proses;* so you perceive that I am not at all idle. And are you, too, busy? I doubt that your life at Paris draws too much upon your

time, which is a pity. Can't you divide your day, so as to combine both? I have had plenty of all sorts of worldly business on my hands last year, and yet it is not so difficult to give a few hours to the *Muses*. This sentence is so like . . . that——

Ever, etc.

If we were together, I should publish both my plays (periodically) in our *joint* journal. It should be our plan to publish all our best things in that way.

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, July 6, 1821.

. . . . . .

At the particular request of the Contessa G. I have promised *not* to continue *Don Juan*. You will therefore look upon these 3 cantos as the last of that poem. She had read the two first in the French translation, and never ceased beseeching me to write no more of it. The reason of this is not at first obvious to a superficial observer of FOREIGN manners; but it arises from the wish of all women to exalt the *sentiment* of the passions, and to keep up the illusion which is their empire. Now *Don Juan* strips off this illusion, and laughs at that and most other things. I never knew a woman who did *not* protect *Rousseau*, nor one who did not dislike de Grammont, Gil Blas, and all the *comedy* of the passions, when brought out naturally. But "King's blood must keep word," as Serjeant Bothwell says.

Write, you Scamp!

SCENE in Romagna.

"*To see thy sunny fields, my Italy,*
Nearer and dearer yet, and dearer still
The more approach'd, and dearest were they free."

—Prophecy of Dante, Canto II, p. 167.

Your parcel of *extracts* never came and never will: you should have sent it by the post; but you are growing a sad fellow, and some fine day we shall have to dissolve partnership.

TO JOHN MURRAY

July 14th, 1821.

DEAR SIR, — According to your wish, I have expedited by this post two packets addressed to J. Barrow, Esqre, Admiralty, etc. The one contains the returned proofs, with such corrections as time permits, of *Sardanapalus*. The other contains the tragedy of *The Two Foscari* in five acts, the argument of which Foscolo or Hobhouse can explain to you; or you will find it at length in P. Daru's history of Venice: also, more briefly, in Sismondi's *I. R.* An outline of it is in the *Pleasures of Memory* also. The name is a dactyl, "Fŏscărĭ." Have the goodness to write by return of Post, which is essential.

I trust that *Sardanapalus* will not be mistaken for a *political* play, which was so far from my intention that I thought of nothing but Asiatic history. The Venetian play, too, is rigidly historical. My object has been to dramatise, like the Greeks (a *modest* phrase!), striking passages of history, as they did of history and mythology. You will find all this very *un*like Shakespeare; and so much the better in one sense, for I look upon him to be the *worst* of models, though the most extraordinary of writers. It has been my object to be as simple and severe as Alfieri, and I have broken down the *poetry* as nearly as I could to common language. The hardship is, that in

these times one can neither speak of kings nor Queens without suspicion of politics or personalities. I intended neither.

TO JOHN MURRAY

[Undated.]

DEAR SIR, — The enclosed letter is written in bad humour, but not without provocation. However, let it (that is, the bad humour) go for little; but I must request your serious attention to the abuses of the printer, which ought never to have been permitted. You forget that all the fools in London (the chief purchasers of your publications) will condemn in me the stupidity of your printer. For instance, in the Notes to Canto fifth, "the *Adriatic* shore of the Bosphorus," instead of the *Asiatic ! !* All this may seem little to you — so fine a gentleman with your ministerial connections; but it is serious to me, who am thousands of miles off, and have no opportunity of not proving myself the fool your printer makes me, except your pleasure and leisure, forsooth.

The Gods prosper you, and forgive you, for I won't.

B.

TO JOHN MURRAY

Ra, September 4th, 1821.

DEAR SIR, — By Saturday's post, I sent you a fierce and furibund letter upon the subject of the printer's blunders in *Don Juan*. I must solicit your attention to the topic, though my wrath has subsided into sullenness.

Yesterday I received Mr. Mawman, a friend of yours, and because he is a friend of *yours;* and that 's more than I would do in an *English* case, except for those whom I honour. I was as civil as I could be among packages, even to the very chairs and tables; for I am going to *Pisa* in a few weeks, and have sent and am sending off my chattels. It regretted me that, my books and everything being packed, I could not send you a few things I meant for you; but they were all sealed and baggaged, so as to have made it a Month's work to get at them again. I gave him an envelope, with the Italian Scrap in it,[1] alluded to in my Gilchrist defence. Hobhouse will make it out for you, and it will make you laugh, and him too, the *spelling* particularly. The "*Mericani,*" of whom they call me the "Capo" (or Chief), means "Americans," which is the name given in *Romagna* to a part of the Carbonari[2]; that is to say, to the *popular* part, the *troops* of the Carbonari. They were originally a society of hunters in the forest, who took that name of Americans, but at present comprize some thousands, etc.; but I shan't let you further into the secret, which may be participated with the postmasters. Why they thought me their Chief, I know not: their Chiefs are like "Legion, being Many." However, it is a post of more honour than profit, for, now that they are

[1] An anonymous letter which Byron had received, threatening him with assassination.

[2] The Italian *Carbonari* was a political society whose bond was one of disaffection rather than principle. Owing to want of cohesion and diversity of political aims, it collapsed, and it met the disapproval of Mazzini and later Italian patriots. They took their name from the charcoal-burners (Carbonari).

persecuted, it is fit that I should aid them; and so I have done, as far as my means will permit. They will rise again some day, for these fools of the Government are blundering: they actually seem to know *nothing;* for they have arrested and banished many of their *own* party, and let others escape who are not their friends.

TO JOHN MURRAY

RAVENNA, September 12th, 1821.

DEAR SIR, — By Tuesday's post, I forwarded, in three packets, the drama of *Cain*, in three acts, of which I request the acknowledgment when arrived. To the last speech of *Eve*, in the last act (*i. e.* where she curses Cain), add these three lines to the concluding one —

May the Grass wither from thy foot! the Woods
Deny thee shelter! Earth a home! the Dust
A Grave! the Sun his light! and Heaven her God!

There's as pretty a piece of Imprecation for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet with in the course of your business. But don't forget the addition of the above three lines, which are clinchers to Eve's speech.

Let me know what Gifford thinks (if the play arrives in safety); for I have a good opinion of the piece, as poetry: it is in my gay metaphysical style, and in the *Manfred* line.

You must at least commend my facility and variety, when you consider what I have done within the last fifteen

months, with my head, too, full of other and of mundane matters. But no doubt you will avoid saying any good of it, for fear I should raise the price upon you: that's right — stick to business! Let me know what your other ragamuffins are writing, for I suppose you don't like starting too many of your Vagabonds at once. You may give them the start, for anything I care.

If this arrives in time to be added to the other two dramas, publish them *together:* if not, publish it separately, in the *same* form, to tally for the purchasers. Let me have a proof of the whole speedily. It is longer than *Manfred.*

Why don't you publish my *Pulci?*[1] the best thing I ever wrote, with the Italian to it. I wish I was alongside of you: nothing is ever done in a man's absence; every body runs counter, because they *can.* If ever I *do* return to England (which I shan't though), I will write a poem to which *English Bards,* etc., shall be New Milk, in comparison. Your present literary world of mountebanks stands in need of such an Avatar; but I am not yet quite bilious enough: a season or two more, and a provocation or two, will wind me up to the point, and then, have at the whole set!

I have no patience with the sort of trash you send me out by way of books; except Scott's novels, and three or four other things, I never saw such work or works. Campbell is lecturing, Moore idling, Southey twaddling, Wordsworth drivelling, Coleridge muddling, Joanna Baillie piddling, Bowles quibbling, squabbling, and snivelling.

[1] Translation of Pulci's "Morgante Maggiore."

Milman will *do*, if he don't cant too much, nor imitate Southey: the fellow has poesy in him; but he is envious, and unhappy, as all the envious are. Still he is among the best of the day. Barry Cornwall will do better by-and-bye, I dare say, if he don't get spoilt by green tea, and the praises of Pentonville and Paradise Row. The pity of these men is, that they never lived either in *high life*, nor in *solitude:* there is no medium for the knowledge of the *busy* or the *still* world. If admitted into high life for a season, it is merely as *spectators* — they form no part of the Mechanism thereof. Now Moore and I, the one by circumstances, and the other by birth, happened to be free of the corporation, and to have entered into its pulses and passions, *quarum partes fuimus*. Both of us have learnt by this much which nothing else could have taught us.

Yours,

B.

TO THOMAS MOORE

RAVENNA, September, 19, 1821.

I AM in all the sweat, dust, and blasphemy of an universal packing of all my things, furniture, etc., for Pisa, whither I go for the winter. The cause has been the exile of all my fellow Carbonics, and, amongst them, of the whole family of Madame G.; who, you know, was divorced from her husband last week, "on account of P.P., clerk of this parish,"[1] and who is obliged to join her father and

[1] An allusion to Pope's "Memoirs of P.P., Clerk of this Parish."

relatives, now in exile there, to avoid being shut up in a monastery, because the Pope's decree of separation required her to reside in *casa paterna*, or else, for decorum's sake, in a convent. As I could not say with Hamlet, "Get thee to a nunnery," I am preparing to follow them.

It is awful work, this love, and prevents all a man's projects of good or glory. I wanted to go to Greece lately (as everything seems up here) with her brother, who is a very fine, brave fellow (I have seen him put to the proof), and wild about liberty. But the tears of a woman who has left her husband for a man, and the weakness of one's own heart, are paramount to these projects, and I can hardly indulge them.

We were divided in choice between Switzerland and Tuscany, and I gave my vote for Pisa, as nearer the Mediterranean, which I love for the sake of the shores which it washes, and for my young recollections of 1809. Switzerland is a curst selfish, swinish country of brutes, placed in the most romantic region of the world. I never could bear the inhabitants, and still less their English visitors; for which reason, after writing for some information about houses, upon hearing that there was a colony of English all over the cantons of Geneva, etc., I immediately gave up the thought, and persuaded the Gambas to do the same.

. . . . . .

What are you doing, and where are you? in England? Nail Murray — nail him to his own counter — till he shells out the thirteens. Since I wrote to you, I have sent him another tragedy — *Cain* by name — making three in MS.

now in his hands, or in the printer's. It is in the *Manfred* metaphysical style, and full of some Titanic declamation; — Lucifer being one of the *dram. pers.*, who takes Cain a voyage among the stars, and afterwards to "Hades," where he shows him the phantoms of a former world, and its inhabitants. I have gone upon the notion of Cuvier, that the world has been destroyed three or four times, and was inhabited by mammoths, behemoths, and what not; but *not* by man till the Mosaic period, as, indeed, is proved by the strata of bones found; — those of all unknown animals, and known, being dug out, but none of mankind. I have, therefore, supposed Cain to be shown, in the *rational* Preadamites, beings endowed with a higher intelligence than man, but totally unlike him in form, and with much greater strength of mind and person. You may suppose the small talk which takes place between him and Lucifer upon these matters is not quite canonical.

The consequence is, that Cain comes back and kills Abel in a fit of dissatisfaction, partly with the politics of Paradise, which had driven them all out of it, and partly because (as it is written in Genesis) Abel's sacrifice was the more acceptable to the Deity. I trust that the Rhapsody has arrived — it is in three acts, and entitled "*A Mystery*," according to the former Christian custom, and in honour of what it probably will remain to the reader.

Yours, etc.

FROM "MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE"

ACT III. SCENE I — SCENE, *the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it. A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.*

Enter the DOGE *alone, disguised.*

Doge (*solus*). I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee
A lazar-house of tyranny: the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not;
And therefore was I punish'd, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane!
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead,
Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,
Moulder'd into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes,
When what is now a handful shook the earth —

Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house!
Vault where two Doges rest — my sires![1] who died
The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labours, wounds, and state
I have inherited, — let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,
And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me!
I call them up, and them and thee to witness
What it hath been which put me to this task —
Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,
Their mighty name dishonour'd all *in* me,
Not *by* me, but by the ungrateful nobles
We fought to make our equals, not our lords: —
And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
Who perish'd in the field, where I since conquer'd,
Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice' foes, there offer'd up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?
Spirits! smile down upon me; for my cause
Is yours, in all life now can be of yours, —
Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,
And in the future fortunes of our race!
Let me but prosper, and I make this city
Free and immortal, and our house's name
Worthier of what you were, now and hereafter!

. . . . . .

[1] "All that is said of his *Ancestral Doges* as buried in this church is altered from the fact, *they being in St. Mark's*. Make a note of this and put *Editor* as the subscription to it." (Byron, in a letter to Murray, Oct. 12, 1820.)

CHURCH of St. John
and St. Paul, Venice.

" Tall fane!
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead."
— Marino Faliero, Act III, Scene 1, p. 197.

ACT IV. SCENE I. — *Palazzo of the Patrician* LIONI. LIONI *laying aside the mask and cloak which the Venetian nobles wore in public, attended by a Domestic.*

Lioni.

I will to rest, right weary of this revel,
The gayest we have held for many moons,
And yet, I know not why, it cheer'd me not;
There came a heaviness across my heart,
Which, in the lightest movement of the dance,
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united
Even with the lady of my love, oppress'd me,
And through my spirit chill'd my blood, until
A damp like death rose o'er my brow. I strove
To laugh the thought away, but 't would not be;
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark:
So that I left the festival before
It reach'd its zenith, and will woo my pillow
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light
The lamp within my chamber.

Ant.

Yes, my lord:
Command you no refreshment?

Lioni.

Nought, save sleep,
Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it,
[*Exit* ANTONIO.
Though my breast feels too anxious; I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits; 't is
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon has brighten'd. What a still-
ness! [*Goes to an open lattice.*
And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls,
Spread over the reluctant gloom, which haunts
Those vast and dimly latticed galleries,
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which show'd all things, but nothing as they were.
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Prank'd forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,
Believed itself forgotten, and was fool'd.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flush'd and crowded wassailers, and wasted

Its hours of rest in dreaming this was pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.
The music, and the banquet, and the wine —
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers —
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments —
The white arms and the raven hair — the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself; yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze and heaven;
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry
Of the fair forms which terminate so well —
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments — art and nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of beauty as the parch'd pilgrim's
On Arab sands the false mirage which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst, —
Are gone. Around me are the stars and waters —
Worlds mirror'd in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Soften'd with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,

Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear'd up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard, while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; — the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse;
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city —
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm!
I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away

Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate; and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this.

. . . . . .

FROM "THE TWO FOSCARI"

Act I. Scene I.

(Jacopo Foscari, having been imprisoned in Candia on suspicion of crimes against the government is brought back to Venice for trial.)

. . . . . .

The Guard conducts Jacopo *to a window of the Ducal Palace.*

Guard.

There, sir, 't is
Open — How feel you?

Jac. Fos.

Like a boy — Oh, Venice!

Guard.

And your limbs?

Jac. Fos.

Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimm'd
The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,

Raced for our pleasure in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal! — How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they wax'd fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As show'd that I had search'd the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurn'd
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird. — I was a boy then.

Guard.

Be a man now: there never was more need
Of manhood's strength.

Jac. Fos. (*looking from the lattice*).

My beautiful, my own,
My only Venice — *this is breath!* Thy breeze,

Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howl'd about my Candiote dungeon and
Made my heart sick.

Guard.

I see the colour comes
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength to bear
What more may be imposed! — I dread to think on 't.

Jac. Fos.

They will not banish me again? — No — no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.

Guard.

Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.

Jac. Fos.

I confess'd
Once — twice before: both times they exiled me.

Guard.

And the third time will slay you.

Jac. Fos.

Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.

Guard.

And can you so much love the soil which hates you?

Jac. Fos.

The soil! — Oh no, it is the seed of the soil
Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.
. . . . . .

FROM "CAIN"

Act I. Scene I.

. . . . . .

Cain (*solus*).

And this is
Life — Toil! and wherefore should I toil? — because
My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had *I* done in this? —I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this?
The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, "'T was *his* will,
And *he* is good." How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?

I judge but by the fruits — and they are bitter —
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here? — A shape like to the angels,
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The cherubim-defended battlements?
If I shrink not from these, the fire-arm'd angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality. And is it
So? and can aught grieve save humanity?
He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer.

Mortal!

Cain.

Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer.

Master of spirits.

Cain.

And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer.

I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain.

How!
You know my thoughts?

Lucifer.

They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought; — 't is your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

Cain.

What immortal part?
This has not been reveal'd: the tree of life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit is death!

Lucifer.

They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.

Cain.

I live,
But live to die: and, living, see no thing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,

COUNTRY scene in Italy.

"*Fair Italy, . . .*
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes fertility." —Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xxvi, p. 66.

A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome —
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer.

Thou livest, and must live for ever: think not
The earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence — it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

Cain.

No *less!* and why
No more?

Lucifer.

It may be thou shalt be as we.

Cain.

And ye?

Lucifer.

Are everlasting.

Cain.

Are ye happy?

Lucifer.

We are mighty.

Cain.

Are ye happy?

Lucifer.

No; art thou?

Cain.

How should I be so? Look on me!

Lucifer.

Poor clay!
And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

Cain.

I am: — and thou, with all thy might, what art thou?

Lucifer.

One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain.

Ah!
Thou look'st almost a god; and —

Lucifer.

I am none:
And having fail'd to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquer'd; let him reign!

Cain.

Who?

Lucifer.

Thy sire's Maker and the earth's.

Cain.

And heaven's,
And all that in them is. So I have heard
His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer.

They say — what they must sing and say on pain
Of being that which I am — and thou art —
Of spirits and of men.

Cain.

And what is that?

Lucifer.

Souls who dare use their immortality —
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good! If he has made,
As he saith — which I know not, nor believe —
But, if he made us — he cannot unmake:
We are immortal! — nay, he 'd *have* us so,
That he may torture: let him! He is great —
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;
Could he but crush himself, 't were the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and men, at least we sympathise —

And, suffering in concert, make our pangs,
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create —

Cain.

Thou speak'st to me of things which long have swum
In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,
Which shut them out, and me: I feel the weight
Of daily toil and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things: — but I thought alone
This misery was *mine.* — My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse; my brother is
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my Adah, my
Own and beloved, she, too, understands not

The mind which overwhelms me: never till
Now met I aught to sympathise with me.
'T is well — I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer.

And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul
For such companionship, I would not now
Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.

Cain.

Ah! didst *thou* tempt my mother?

Lucifer.

I tempt none,
Save with the truth: was not the tree, the tree
Of knowledge? and was not the tree of life
Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck them not?
Did *I* plant things prohibited within
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have made ye
Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
Because 'ye should not eat the fruits of life,
And become gods as we.' Were those his words?

Cain.

They were, as I have heard from those who heard them,
In thunder.

Lucifer.

Then who was the demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would

Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of knowledge?

Cain.

Would they had snatch'd both
The fruits, or neither!

Lucifer.

One is yours already;
The other may be still.

Cain.

How so?

Lucifer.

By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things — 't is made
To sway.

Cain.

But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer.

I?
Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?

Cain.

They say the serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer.

Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high:

The proud One will not so far falsify,
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the snake —
No more; and yet not less than those he tempted,
In nature being earth also — *more* in *wisdom*,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I 'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain.

But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer.

He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forky tongue.
I tell thee that the serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
Fond parents listen'd to a creeping thing,
And fell. For what should spirits tempt them? What
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade

Space — but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not,
With all thy tree of knowledge.

Cain.

But thou canst not
Speak aught of knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.

Lucifer.

And heart to look on?

Cain.

Be it proved.

Lucifer.

Darest thou to look on Death?

Cain.

He has not yet
Been seen.

Lucifer.

But must be undergone.

Cain.

My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he 's named; and Abel lifts his eyes
To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.

Lucifer.

And thou?

Cain.

Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer.

It has no shape; but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

Cain.

Ah!
I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer.

Ask the Destroyer.

Cain.

Who?

Lucifer.

The Maker — call him
Which name thou wilt: he makes but to destroy.

Cain.

I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of death; although I know not what it is,

Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd out
In the vast desolate night in search of him;
And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequer'd
By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watch'd for what I thought his coming; for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 't was which shook us all — but nothing came.
And then I turn'd my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?

Lucifer.

Perhaps — but long outlive both thine and thee.

Cain.

I 'm glad of that: I would not have them die —
They are so lovely. What is death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 't is denounced against us,
Both them who sinn'd and sinn'd not, as an ill —
What ill?

Lucifer.

To be resolved into the earth.

Cain.

But shall I know it?

Lucifer.

As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

RUINS of Adrian's Villa
near Tivoli.

"Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?"

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxx, p. 81.

Cain.

Were I quiet earth
That were no evil; would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer.

That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to know.

Cain.

But not to live, or wherefore pluck'd he not
The life-tree?

Lucifer.

He was hinder'd.

Cain.

Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit: — but ere he pluck'd
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it — fear I know not what!

Lucifer.

And I, who know all things, fear nothing: see
What is true knowledge.

Cain.

Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer.

Ay, upon one condition

Cain.

Name it.

Lucifer.

That
Thou dost fall down and worship me — thy Lord.

Cain.

Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer.

No.

Cain.

His equal?

Lucifer.

No; — I have nought in common with him!
Nor would: I would be aught above — beneath —
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great: —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall — be thou amongst the first.

. . . . . .

Enter ADAH.

Adah.

My brother, I have come for thee;
It is our hour of rest and joy — and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast labour'd not

This morn; but I have done thy task: the fruits
Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens:
Come away.

Cain.

Seest thou not?

Adah.

I see an angel;
We have seen many: will he share our hour
Of rest? — he is welcome.

Cain.

But he is not like
The angels we have seen.

Adah.

Are there, then, others?
But he is welcome, as they were: they deign'd
To be our guests — will he?

Cain (to Lucifer).

Wilt thou?

Lucifer.

I ask
Thee to be mine.

Cain.

I must away with him.

Adah.

And leave us?

Cain.

Ay.

Adah.

And *me?*

Cain.

Belovèd Adah!

Adah.

Let me go with thee.

Lucifer.

No, she must not.

Adah.

Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain.

He is a god.

Adah.

How know'st thou?

Cain.

He speaks like
A god.

Adah.

So did the serpent, and it lied.

Lucifer.

Thou errest, Adah! — was not the tree that
Of knowledge?

Adah.

Ay — to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer.

And yet that grief is knowledge — so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 't was with truth;
And truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.

Adah.

But all we know of it has gather'd
Evil on ill: expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was — and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me — I
Love thee.

Lucifer.

More than thy mother and thy sire?

Adah.

I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer.

No, not yet:
It one day will be in your children.

Adah.

What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer.

Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah.

Oh, my God!
Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other? and
In multiplying our being multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them? — And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer.

The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you — whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.

Adah.

What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue? — if it doth, we are the slaves
Of —

Lucifer.

Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.

Adah.

Omnipotence
Must be all goodness.

Lucifer.

Was it so in Eden?

Adah.

Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.

Lucifer.

As true.
Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?

Adah.

Oh, my mother! thou
Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast pass'd

Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits:
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts — as thou
Wert work'd on by the snake in thy most flush'd
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.
I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him: in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart
Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws me near.
Nearer, and nearer: — Cain — Cain — save me from him!

Cain.

What dreads my Adah? This is no ill spirit.

Adah.

He is not God — nor God's: I have beheld
The cherubs and the seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain.

But there are spirits loftier still —
The archangels.

Lucifer.

And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah.

Ay — but not blessèd.

Lucifer.

If the blessedness
Consists in slavery — no.

Adah.

I have heard it said,
The seraphs *love most* — cherubim *know most;*
And this should be a cherub — since he loves not.

Lucifer.

And if the higher knowledge quenches love,
What must *he be* you cannot love when known?
Since the all-knowing cherubim love least,
The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Choose betwixt love and knowledge — since there is
No other choice. Your sire has chosen already;
His worship is but fear.

Adah.

Oh, Cain! choose love.

Cain.

For thee, my Adah, I choose not — it was
Born with me — but I love nought else.

Adah.

Our parents?

Cain.

Did they love us when they snatched from the tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

Adah.

We were not born then — and if we had been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain?

Cain.

My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget — but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sow'd the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour! They pluck'd the tree of science,
And sin — and not content with their own sorrow,
Begot *me* — *thee* — and all the few that are,
And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages! — and *I* must be sire of such things!
Thy beauty and thy love — my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many years
Of sin and pain — or few, but still of sorrow,
Intercheck'd with an instant of brief pleasure,
To Death — the unknown! Methinks the tree of knowledge
Hath not fulfill'd its promise: — if they sinn'd,
At least they ought to have known all things that are
Of knowledge — and the mystery of death.

What do they know? — that they are miserable.
What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that?

Adah.

I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
Wert happy —

Cain.

Be thou happy, then, alone —
I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.

Adah.

Alone I could not,
Nor *would* be happy: but with those around us,
I think I could be so, despite of death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
It seems an awful shadow — if I may
Judge from what I have heard.

Lucifer.

And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy?

Adah.

Alone! Oh, my God!
Who could be happy and alone, or good?
To me my solitude seems sin; unless
When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
His brother, and our children, and our parents.

Lucifer.

Yet thy God is alone; and is he happy,
Lonely, and good?

Adah.

He is not so; he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy.
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?

Lucifer.

Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden;
Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
It is not tranquil.

Adah.

Alas, no! and you —Are you of heaven?

Lucifer.

If I am not, enquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
And some of us resist, and both in vain,
His seraphs say; but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without. There is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

Adah.

It is a beautiful star; I love it for
Its beauty.

Lucifer.

And why not adore?

Adah.

Our father

Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer.

But the symbols

Of the Invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible; and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of heaven.

Adah.

Our father

Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer.

Hast *thou* seen him?

Adah.

Yes — in his works.

Lucifer.

But in his being?

Adah.

No —

Save in my father, who is God's own image;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee —
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming: as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us; but thou seem'st

Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns;
So beautiful, unnumber'd, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.

. . . . . .

THE YEARS 1822 AND 1823

PORTRAIT of Byron painted by Vincenzo Camuccini.
Now in gallery of S. Luca, Rome.

THE YEARS 1822 AND 1823

PISA: LEGHORN: GENOA

INTRODUCTORY

AT about the time of Byron's removal to Pisa, the three dramas — "Sardanapalus," "The Two Foscari," and "Cain" — were published together in a single volume. "Cain" aroused at once a tremendous outcry. Although Goethe praised it extravagantly and Shelley called it "apocalyptic," Byron's countrymen in England denounced it as blasphemous, devilish, satanic, and every similar adjective in the language. Abuse was heaped not only on author, but on publisher. John Murray not only was attacked in journals and pamphlets, but he was also threatened with prosecution in the courts for "disseminating moral poison." Jeffrey, in the "Edinburgh Review," called it "an argument directed against the goodness and power of the Deity and against the reasonableness of religion in general." This was the attitude of the English public at large. Byron, in his early letters to his friends from Pisa, makes eloquent defence.

To the reader of "Cain," in the year 1906, when so many things in controversy in 1822 have become accepted beliefs, the excitement seems out of all pro-

portion to the cause. "Cain" was indeed a protest against the prevailing theology of the day; but Wordsworth had already led the way by his revolt against the mechanical interpretation of the universe, Shelley was prophesying a regeneration through the gentle means of faithfulness and love, and Byron's note, although of sterner and more defiant tone, was in unison with these other poets, and with advanced thinkers generally.

With the publication of Byron's next drama, "Werner," his connection with Murray as publisher and, except at rare intervals, as correspondent, is at an end. Murray had no wish to encounter fresh obloquy by publishing the new cantos (VI–XI) of "Don Juan," and he held the manuscript of "The Vision of Judgment" so long that Byron naturally grew impatient and recalled it. The copyrights of future poems were transferred to John Hunt.

But by this time that "Journal of his own," of which he had been dreaming for years, and for which he and Shelley had been preparing the way for months, was now ready, and the first issue of "The Liberal" appeared October 15, 1822. The articles from Byron were "The Vision of Judgment," a prose "Letter to the Editor of 'My Grandmother's Review'" (the British), and some "Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh." Shelley, whose death, however, occurred before the day of publication, had contributed "May-day Night," a translation from Goethe's "Faust";

the remainder of the articles were by the editor, Leigh Hunt. It was published in England by the editor's brother, John Hunt, and it was at once fiercely attacked on all sides. The "Literary Gazette" in describing its contents said, "Lord Byron has contributed impiety, vulgarity, inhumanity, and heartlessness; Mr. Shelley, a burlesque upon Goethe; and Mr. Leigh Hunt, conceit, trumpery, ignorance, and wretched verse." The daily press was even more violent, "The Courier" calling it a "scoundrel-like publication," "a foul blot upon our national literature." The periodical was short-lived, ceasing with its fourth number in July, 1823; — were any similar number of pages ever printed at a greater price of happiness, friendship, even life itself? Leigh Hunt with invalid wife and seven children had been brought from England and settled in the lower floor of Byron's palace at Pisa, where the two families speedily became so obnoxious to each other that future co-operation became almost impossible; the voyage which cost Shelley his life was made in returning to his own home after going to greet his friend and to help establish him in his new home; and Leigh Hunt, after the deaths of both his partners, found himself and family stranded, almost a beggar, in a foreign land.

But notwithstanding all misadventures, the nearly two years which Byron spent at Pisa, including his summer residence at Leghorn, are the years of his life which the admirers of his poetry can regard with

least apology. He had the daily companionship of Shelley — Byron was always at his best with Shelley — and the rest of that congenial company which included Edward and Jane Williams, Medwin, Trelawney, Taafe, and, of course, the Gambas. West, the American artist who painted his portrait at that time, says, "Upon the whole, I left him with an impression that he possessed an excellent heart which had been misconstrued on all hands from little else than a reckless levity of manners which he took a whimsical pride in opposing to those of other people."

Byron's household continued to be carefully watched at Pisa, as it had been at Ravenna, by the agents of the Austrian government. An Italian version of "The Prophecy of Dante" had appeared, and was declared "not written in the spirit of our Government or any Italian Government. Lord Byron makes Dante his spokesman and the prophet of democratic independence, as if this were the salvation of Italy," etc., etc. Moreover, a street riot, beginning between the servants of the Byron household and a Pisan sergeant-major, ended by involving both servants and masters in a trial at court which dragged on for several weeks. The government being anxious to be rid of the whole party took advantage of this and a subsequent offence against local laws at the Leghorn villa to warn the Gambas that unless they left the country within three days formal sentence of banishment would be passed upon them. A respite of a few days was granted,

however, but in July, 1822, they took passports for Genoa; thither Byron followed them in the month of September.

The new home was the Villa Saluzzo at Albaro, about two miles from Genoa. Here Byron continued "Don Juan," with cantos XII–XVI, and wrote also another satire, "The Age of Bronze," an idyllic tale of the South Seas, and "The Island." Here also he was visited by Captain Blaquière sent by a London Committee to urge him to take command of an expedition to Greece to aid in the war for Greek independence. Byron could not long resist an appeal so flattering as well as so congenial, and after but little hesitation consented, sailing July 14, 1823. With the remaining nine months of his life, until his death on the 19th of April, 1824, this volume is not concerned. Politics and war now usurped the place of poetry; his correspondence henceforth relates almost exclusively to procuring from England every penny of his income for the cause he had at heart; his whole energy is given to mitigating the necessary horrors of war, and to introducing humanity in the treatment of prisoners.

"Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it"; hard men, comparative strangers, wept over his death, and the Greek Governor-General confessed his own inadequacy to his task when left without his chief counsellor.

A monument in Athens commemorates Byron's

memory; but neither the Greek wish — that he might be buried in the temple of Theseus — nor his own — to be buried in Italian soil — was granted, and the body was taken to England in the expectation that it would be placed in Westminster Abbey. This being denied by the Dean of the Abbey, Byron was laid to rest among his ancestors in the village church of Hucknall Torkard, near Nottingham. A mural tablet, placed by his half-sister, is inscribed to his memory. There is no epitaph; but he who seeks this spot will recall there Shelley's lines from "Adonais":

> Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
> Over his living head like Heaven was bent
> An early but enduring monument.

FROM "DETACHED THOUGHTS"

1.

Oh! talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our Youth are the days of our Glory,
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two and twenty
Are worth all your laurels though ever so plenty.

2.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'T is but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary,
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give Glory?

3.

Oh! Fame! if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'T was less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear One discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

4.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee;
Her Glance was the best of the rays that surround thee,
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was Glory.

I composed these stanzas (except the fourth, added now) a few days ago, on the road from Florence to Pisa.

PISA, Novr. 6th, 1821.

TO JOHN MURRAY

PISA, December 4, 1821.

. . . . . .

I have got here into a famous old feudal palazzo on the Arno, large enough for a garrison, with dungeons below and cells in the walls, and so full of *Ghosts*, that the learned Fletcher (my valet) has begged leave to change his room, and then refused to occupy his *new* room, because there were more ghosts there than in the other. It is quite true that there are most extraordinary noises (as in all old buildings), which have terrified the servants so as to incommode me extremely. There is one place where people were evidently *walled up;* for there is but one possible passage, *broken* through the wall, and then meant to be closed again upon the inmate. The house

belonged to the Lanfranchi family (the same mentioned by Ugolino in his dream, as his persecutor with Sismondi), and has had a fierce owner or two in its time. The staircase, etc., is said to have been built by Michel Agnolo (*sic*). It is not yet cold enough for a fire. What a climate!

I am, however, bothered about these spectres (as they say the last occupants were, too), of whom I have as yet seen nothing, nor, indeed, heard (*myself*); but all the other ears have been regaled by all kinds of supernatural sounds. The first night I thought I heard an odd noise, but it has not been repeated. I have now been here more than a month.

Yours,

BYRON.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

PISA, January 12, 1822.

. . . . . .

I am glad you accepted the inscription.[1] I meant to have inscribed *The Foscarini* to you instead; but, first, I heard that *Cain* was thought the least bad of the two as a composition; and, 2dly, I have abused Southey like a pickpocket, in a note to *The Foscarini*, and I recollected that he is a friend of yours (though not of mine), and that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend anything containing such matters about another. However, I'll work the Laureate before I have done with

[1] The dedication of "Cain."

PALAZZO Lanfranchi, now called Toscanelli.
Design attributed to Michel Angelo.

Byron's residence in Pisa.

— See Letter to John Murray, p. 241.

him, as soon as I can muster Billingsgate therefor. I like a row, and always did from a boy, in the course of which propensity, I must needs say, that I have found it the most easy of all to be gratified, personally and poetically. You disclaim "jealousies"; but I would ask, as Boswell did of Johnson, "of *whom could* you be *jealous?*"—of none of the living certainly, and (taking all and all into consideration) of which of the dead? I don't like to bore you about the Scotch novels (as they call them, though two of them are wholly English, and the rest half so), but nothing can or could ever persuade me, since I was the first ten minutes in your company, that you are *not* the man. To me those novels have so much of "Auld lang syne" (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them; and when I removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day, and sent on my library before, they were the only books that I kept by me, although I already have them by heart.

January 27, 1822.

I delayed till now concluding, in the hope that I should have got *The Pirate*, who is under way for me, but has not yet hove in sight. I hear that your daughter is married, and I suppose by this time you are half a grandfather — a young one, by the way. I have heard great things of Mrs. Lockhart's personal and mental charms, and much good of her lord: that you may live to see as many novel Scotts as there are Scott's novels, is the very bad pun, but sincere wish of

Yours ever most affectionately, etc.

P. S.— Why don't you take a turn in Italy? You would find yourself as well known and as welcome as in the Highlands among the natives. As for the English, you would be with them as in London; and I need not add, that I should be delighted to see you again, which is far more than I shall ever feel or say for England, or (with a few exceptions "of kith, kin, and allies") anything that it contains. But my "heart warms to the tartan," or to anything of Scotland, which reminds me of Aberdeen and other parts, not so far from the Highlands as that town, about Invercauld and Braemar, where I was sent to drink goat's *fey* in 1795–6, in consequence of a threatened decline after the scarlet fever. But I am gossiping, so, good-night — and the gods be with your dreams!

Pray, present my respects to Lady Scott, who may, perhaps, recollect having seen me in town in 1815.

I see that one of your supporters (for, like Sir Hildebrand, I am fond of Guillim) is a *mermaid;* it is my *crest* too, and with precisely the same curl of tail. There 's concatenation for you: — I am building a little cutter at Genoa, to go a-cruising in the summer. I know *you* like the sea, too.

TO JOHN MURRAY

PISA, Fy 8th 1822.

DEAR SIR, — Attacks upon me were to be expected; but I perceive one upon *you* in the papers, which I confess that I did not expect. How, or in what manner,

you[1] can be considered responsible for what *I* publish, I am at a loss to conceive.

If *Cain* be "blasphemous," *Paradise Lost* is "blasphemous," and the very words of the Oxford Gentleman, "Evil, be thou my Good" are from that very poem, from the mouth of Satan; and is there anything more in that of Lucifer in the Mystery? *Cain* is nothing more than a drama, not a piece of argument: if Lucifer and Cain speak as the first Murderer and the first Rebel may be supposed to speak, surely all the rest of the personages talk also according to their characters — and the stronger passions have ever been permitted to the drama.

I have even avoided introducing the Deity, as in Scripture (though Milton does, and not very wisely either); but have adopted his Angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shocking any feelings on the subject by falling short of what all uninspired men must fall short in, viz., giving an adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah. The Old Mysteries introduced him liberally enough, and all this is avoided in the New one.

The Attempt to *bully you*, because they think it won't succeed with me, seems to me as atrocious an attempt as ever disgraced the times. What? when Gibbon's, Hume's, Priestley's, and Drummond's publishers have been allowed to rest in peace for seventy years, are *you* to be

[1] As the publisher of "Cain," Murray had been attacked in a pamphlet called "A Remonstrance" signed "Oxoniensis." The writer took the position: "You are responsible to that society whose institutions you contribute to destroy; and to those individuals whose dearest hopes you insult, and would annihilate."

singled out for a work of *fiction*, not of history or argument? There must be something at the bottom of this — some private enemy of your own: it is otherwise incredible.

I can only say, *Me, me; en adsum qui feci*, — that any proceedings directed against you, I beg, may be transferred to me, who am willing, and *ought*, to endure them all; that if you have lost money by the publication, I will refund any or all of the Copyright; that I desire you will say, that both *you* and *Mr. Gifford* remonstrated against the publication, as also Mr. Hobhouse; that *I* alone occasioned it, and I alone am the person who, either legally or otherwise, should bear the burthen. If they prosecute, I will come to England — that is, if, by meeting it in my own person, I can save yours. Let me know: you sha'n't suffer for me, if I can help it. — Make any use of this letter which you please.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

P. S. — You will now perceive that it was as well for you, that I have decided upon changing my publisher; though *that* was not my motive, but dissatisfaction at one or two things in your conduct, of no great moment perhaps even then. But now, all such things disappear in my regret at having been unintentionally the means of getting you into a scrape. Be assured that no momentary irritation (at real or supposed omissions or commissions) shall ever prevent me from doing you justice when you deserve it, or that I will allow you (if I can avoid it), to participate in any odium or persecution, which ought to fall on

me only. I had been laughing with some of my correspondents at the rumours, etc., till I saw this assault upon *you;* and I should at that too, if I did not think that it may perhaps hurt your feelings or your business.

When you re-publish (if you do so) *The Foscari,* etc., etc., to the note upon Southey add Mr. Southey's *answer* (which was in the papers): this is but fair play; and I do not desire it out of an affected contempt. What my rejoinder to him will be, is another concern, and is not for publication. Let me have your answer: remember me to Gifford, and do not forget to state that both you and he objected to publishing *Cain* in its present form. As for what the Clergyman says of *Don Juan,* you have brought it upon yourself by your absurd half and half prudery, which, I always foresaw, would bother you at last. An author's *not* putting his name, is nothing — it has been always the custom to publish a thousand anonymous things; but *who* ever heard before of a *publisher's* affecting such a Masquerade as yours was? However, now, you may put my name to the *Juans,* if you like it, though it is of the latest to be of use to you. I always stated to you, that *my* only objection was, in case of the law deciding against you, that they would annihilate my guardianship of the Child. But now (as you really seem in a damned scrape), they may do what they like with me, so that I can get you out of it: but, cheer up: though I have "led my ragamuffins where they are well 'peppered,'" I will stick by them as long as they will keep the field.

I write to you about all this row of bad passions and absurdities with the *Summer* Moon (for here our Winter

is clearer than your Dog days) lighting the winding Arno, with all her buildings and bridges, so quiet and still! — What Nothings we are before the least of these Stars!

TO THOMAS MOORE

PISA, March 4, 1822.

. . . . . .

With respect to "Religion," can I never convince you that *I* have no such opinions as the characters in that drama,[1] which seems to have frightened everybody? Yet *they* are nothing to the expressions in Goethe's *Faust* (which are ten times hardier), and not a whit more bold than those of Milton's Satan. My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character while I *draw* it, but not a moment after the pen is from off the paper.

I am no enemy to religion, but the contrary. As a proof, I am educating my natural daughter a strict Catholic in a convent of Romagna; for I think people can never have *enough* of religion, if they are to have any. I incline, myself, very much to the Catholic doctrines; but if I am to write a drama, I must make my characters speak as I conceive them likely to argue.

As to poor Shelley,[2] who is another bugbear to you and the world, he is, to my knowledge, the *least* selfish and the mildest of men — a man who has made more sacrifices of his fortune and feelings for others than any

[1] "Cain."

[2] Moore had attributed the tone of "Cain" to Shelley's influence.

I ever heard of. With his speculative opinions I have nothing in common, nor desire to have.

The truth is, my dear Moore, you live near the *stove* of society, where you are unavoidably influenced by its heat and its vapours. I did so once — and too much — and enough to give a colour to my whole future existence. As my success in society was *not* inconsiderable, I am surely not a prejudiced judge upon the subject, unless in its favour; but I think it, as now constituted, *fatal* to all great original undertakings of every kind. I never courted it *then*, when I was young and high in blood, and one of its "curled darlings"; and do you think I would do so *now*, when I am living in a clearer atmosphere? One thing *only* might lead me back to it, and that is, to try once more if I could do any good in *politics*; but *not* in the petty politics I see now preying upon our miserable country.

Do not let me be misunderstood, however. If you speak your *own* opinions, they ever had, and will have, the greatest weight with *me*. But if you merely *echo* the *monde* (and it is difficult not to do so, being in its favour and its ferment), I can only regret that you should ever repeat anything to which I cannot pay attention.

But I am prosing. The gods go with you, and as much immortality of all kinds as may suit your present and all other existence.

TO JOHN MURRAY

PISA, March 15th, 1822.

. . . . . .

As to "a poem in the old way to interest the women," as you call it, I shall attempt of that kind nothing further. I follow the bias of my own mind, without considering whether women or men are or are not to be pleased. But this is nothing to my publisher, who must judge and act according to popularity.

Therefore let the things take their chance: if *they pay*, you will pay me in proportion; and if they don't, I must.

The Noel affairs, I hope, will *not* take me to England. I have no desire to revisit that country, unless it be to keep you out of a prison (if this can be effected by my taking your place), or perhaps to get myself into one, by exacting satisfaction from one or two persons who take advantage of my absence to abuse me. Further than this, I have no business nor connection with England, nor desire to have, *out* of my own family and friends, to whom I wish all prosperity. Indeed, I have lived upon the whole so little in England (about five years since I was one and twenty), that my habits are too continental, and your climate would please me as little as the Society.

I saw the Chancellor's report[1] in a French paper. Pray, why don't they prosecute the translation of *Lucretius* or the original with its

"Primus in orbe Deos fecit Timor,"

or

"Tantum Religio potuit suadere Malorum?"

[1] Concerning the prosecution for publication of "Cain."

I have only seen one review of the book, and that was in Galignani's magazine, quoted from the *Monthly*. It was very favourable to the plays, as Compositions.

TO JOHN MURRAY

MONTENERO, near Leghorn, May 26, 1822.

Since I came here, I have been invited by the Americans on board of their Squadron, where I was received with all the kindness which I could wish, and with *more ceremony* than I am fond of. I found them finer ships than your own of the same class, well manned and officered. A number of American gentlemen also were on board at the time, and some ladies. As I was taking leave, an American lady asked me for a *rose* which I wore, for the purpose, she said, of sending to America something which I had about me, as a memorial. I need not add, that I felt the compliment properly. Captain Chauncey showed me an American and very pretty edition of my poems, and offered me a passage to the United States, if I would go there. Commodore Jones was also not less kind and attentive. I have since received the enclosed letter, desiring me to sit for my picture for some Americans.[1] It is

[1] "LEGHORN, 25th May, 1822.

"Casa del Console Olandese, San Marco.

"MY LORD, — If Captain Chauncey of the U. S. Ship *Ontario* had not left Leghorn a day sooner than he expected, it was his intention to have communicated in person the substance of this note.

"Lord Chatham, in the British Senate, and the Eulogist of Washington, are solitary examples in English Literature of those who have done justice to our character. My friend Mr. West of Mississippi, a student in the Academy at Florence, has been desired to request permission to paint a

singular that, in the same year that Lady Noel[1] leaves by will an interdiction for my daughter to see her father's portrait for many years, the individuals of a nation, not remarkable for their liking to the English in particular, nor for flattering men in general, request me to sit for my "pourtraicture," as Baron Bradwardine calls it. I am also told of considerable literary honours in Germany. Goethe, I am told, is my professed patron and protector. At Leipsic, this year, the highest prize was proposed for a translation of two Cantos of *Childe Harold*. I am not sure that this was at *Leipsic*, but Mr. Bancroft[2] was my authority — a good German Scholar (a young American), and an acquaintance of Goethe's.

Goethe and the Germans are particularly fond of *Don Juan*, which they judge of as a work of Art. I had heard something like this before through Baron Lutzerode. The translations have been very frequent of several of the

portrait of your Lordship for the Academy of Fine Arts at New York. I would not have ventured to intrude this request upon your Lordship's patience — if I did not know how much we should value in our own country a portrait of Lord Byron painted by an American, who has already obtained at home some reputation in his art. I beg your Lordship to attribute whatever might appear rude or unreasonable in this note to anything other than to a want of the great respect with which

"I have the honor to be
"Your Lordship's Mo. Obt. Servt.
"GEORGE H. BRUEN,
of New York.

"To the Rt. Honble Lord Byron, Montenero."

[1] The maternal grandmother of Byron's daughter Ada.

[2] In the Lenox Library, New York, is a duodecimo edition of *Don Juan*, with the inscription, "Mr. George Bancroft. From the Author Noel Byron, May 22, 1822."

WILLIAM E. WEST'S Portrait of Byron.

works, and Goethe made a comparison between *Faust* and *Manfred*.

All this is some compensation for your English native brutality, so fully displayed this year (I mean *not your* individually) to its brightest extent.

TO THOMAS MOORE

MONTENERO, VILLA DUPUY, near Leghorn, June 8, 1822.

. . . . . .

I have read the recent article of Jeffrey in a faithful transcription of the impartial Galignani. I suppose the long and short of it is, that he wishes to provoke me to reply. But I won't, for I owe him a good turn still for his kindness by-gone. Indeed, I presume that the present opportunity of attacking me again was irresistible; and I can't blame him, knowing what human nature is. I shall make but one remark: — what does he mean by elaborate?[1] The whole volume was written with the greatest rapidity, in the midst of evolutions, and revolutions, and persecutions, and proscriptions of all who interested me in Italy. They said the same of *Lara*, which, *you* know, was written amidst balls and fooleries, and after coming home from masquerades and routs, in the summer of the sovereigns. Of all I have ever written, they are perhaps the most carelessly composed; and their faults, whatever they may

[1] In Jeffrey's review of "Cain," he had said "The whole argument — and a very elaborate and specious argument it is — is directed against the goodness or the power of the Deity, and against the reasonableness of religion in general; and there is no answer so much as attempted to the offensive doctrines that are so strenuously inculcated."

be, are those of negligence, and not of labour. I do not think this a merit, but it is a fact.

Yours ever and truly,

N. B.

P. S. — You see the great advantage of my new signature; — it may either stand for "Nota Bene" or "Noel Byron," and, as such, will save much repetition, in writing either books or letters. Since I came here, I have been invited on board of the American squadron, and treated with all possible honour and ceremony. They have asked me to sit for my picture; and, as I was going away, an American lady took a rose from me (which had been given to me by a very pretty Italian lady that very morning), because, she said, "She was determined to send or take something which I had about me to America." *There* is a kind of *Lalla Rookh* incident for you! However, all these American honours arise, perhaps, not so much from their enthusiasm for my "Poeshie" as their belief in my dislike to the English, — in which I have the satisfaction to coincide with them. I would rather, however, have a nod from an American, than a snuff-box from an emperor.[1]

TO ISAAC DISRAELI

MONTENERO, VILLA DUPUY, nr Leghorn, June 10, 1822.

. . . . . .

I really cannot know whether I am or am not the Genius you are pleased to call me, but I am very willing

[1] Lady Holland had been left a snuff-box by Napoleon, which had been given to him by the Pope for his clemency in sparing Rome.

to put up with the mistake, if it be one. It is a title dearly enough bought by most men, to render it endurable, even when not quite clearly made out, which it never *can* be till the Posterity, whose decisions are merely dreams to ourselves, has sanctioned or denied it, while it can touch us no further.

Mr. Murray is in possession of an MSS. Memoir of mine (not to be published till I am in my grave) which, strange as it may seem, I never read over since it was written and have no desire to read over again. In it I have told what, as far as I know, is the *truth* — *not* the *whole* truth — for if I had done so I must have involved much private and some dissipated history; but, nevertheless, nothing but the truth, as far as regard for others permitted it to appear.

I do not know whether you have seen those MSS.; but as you are curious in such things as relate to the human mind, I should feel gratified if you had.

I also sent him (Murray) a few days since, a common-place book, by my friend Lord Clare, containing a few things which may perhaps aid his publication in case of his surviving me.

If there are any questions which you would like to ask me as connected with your Philosophy of the literary Mind (*if* mine be a literary mind), I will answer them fairly or give a reason for *not* — good, bad, or indifferent. At present I am paying the penalty of having helped to spoil the public taste, for, as long as I wrote in the false exaggerated style of youth and the times in which we live, they applauded me to the very echo; and within

these few years, when I have endeavoured at better things and written what I suspect to have the principle of duration in it, the Church, the Chancellor, and all men — even to my grand patron Francis Jeffrey Esqre of the *E. R.*— have risen up against me and my later publications. Such is Truth! Men dare not look her in the face, except by degrees: they mistake her for a Gorgon, instead of knowing her to be a Minerva.

I do not mean to apply this mythological simile to my own endeavours. I have only to turn over a few pages of your volumes to find innumerable and far more illustrious instances.

It is lucky that I am of a temper not to be easily turned aside though by no means difficult to irritate. But I am making a dissertation instead of writing a letter. I write to you from the Villa Dupuy, near Leghorn, with the islands of Elba and Corsica visible from my balcony, and my old friend the Mediterranean rolling blue at my feet. As long as I retain my feeling and my passion for Nature, I can partly soften or subdue my other passions and resist or endure those of others.

I have the honour to be, truly, your obliged
and faithful Ser^t^,
NOEL BYRON.

TO THOMAS MOORE

PISA, July 12, 1822.

. . . . . .

Leigh Hunt is here, after a voyage of eight months, during which he has, I presume, made the Periplus of

Hanno the Carthaginian,[1] and with much the same speed. He is setting up a Journal, to which I have promised to contribute; and in the first number the *Vision of Judgment*, by Quevedo Redivivus, will probably appear, with other articles.

Can you give us anything? He seems sanguine about the matter, but (*entre nous*) I am not. I do not, however, like to put him out of spirits by saying so; for he is bilious and unwell. Do, pray, answer *this* letter immediately.

Do send Hunt anything in prose or verse of yours, to start him handsomely — any lyrical, *iri*cal, or what you please.

TO JOHN MURRAY

PISA, August 3, 1822.

. . . . . .

I presume you have heard that Mr. Shelley and Capt. Williams were lost on the 7th[2] ult^o^ in their passage from Leghorn to Spezia in their own open boat. You may imagine the state of their families. I never saw such a scene, nor wish to see such another.

You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley who was, without exception, the *best* and least selfish man I

[1] The *περίπλους* of Hanno the Carthaginian, originally written in the Punic language, and afterwards translated into Greek, was inscribed on a tablet in the Temple of Cronos at Carthage. Hanno was sent on a mission beyond the Pillars of Hercules, to found Libyphœnician towns.

[2] An error. This disaster occurred on the 8th of July.

ever knew. I never knew one who was not a beast in comparison.

. . . . . .

TO THOMAS MOORE

PISA, August 27, 1822.

. . . . . .

We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams on the sea-shore, to render them fit for removal and regular interment. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pile has, on a desolate shore, with mountains in the background and the sea before, and the singular appearance the salt and frankincense gave to the flame. All of Shelley was consumed except his *heart*, which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine.

. . . . . .

Leigh Hunt is sweating articles for his new Journal; and both he and I think it somewhat shabby in *you* not to contribute. Will you become one of the *properrioters?* "Do, and we go snacks." I recommend you to think twice before you respond in the negative.

I have nearly (*quite three*) four new cantos of *Don Juan* ready. I obtained permission from the female Censor Morum[1] of *my* morals to continue it, provided it were immaculate; so I have been as decent as need be. There is a deal of war — a siege, and all that, in the style,

[1] Countess Guiccioli, who had exacted Byron's promise to write no more cantos of "Don Juan," on the completion of Canto V.

graphical and technical, of the shipwreck in Canto Second, which "took," as they say in the Row.

Yours, etc.

P. S. — That . . . Galignani has about ten lies in one paragraph. It was not a Bible that was found in Shelley's pocket, but John Keats's poems. However, it would not have been strange, for he was a great admirer of Scripture as a composition. *I* did not send my bust to the academy of New York; but I sat for my picture to young West,[1] an American artist, at the request of some members of that Academy to *him* that he would take my portrait, — for the Academy, I believe.

I had, and still have, thoughts of South America, but am fluctuating between it and Greece.

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO I

WANTED — A HERO

I

I WANT a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;

[1] William Edward West (1788–1857) went to Italy in 1819 to study art. The artist wrote to his father after completing Byron's picture — "His friends say it is the only likeness ever taken of him, all the others being ideal heads." Several replicas are in existence. The original, with the portrait of Countess Guiccioli made at the same time, is said to be owned by Mr. Joy of Hartham Park, Wilts.

Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I 'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan —
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

II

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, 'nine farrow' of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

III

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Petion, Clootz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know:
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

IV

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There 's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'T is with our hero quietly inurn'd;

Because the army 's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd;
Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

V

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten: — I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I 'll take my friend Don Juan.

VI

Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res'
(Horace makes this the heroic turn-pike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before — by way of episode,
While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

VII

That is the usual method, but not mine —
My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design
Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,

And therefore I shall open with a line
(Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you 'd rather.

. . . . . .

THINGS SWEET

CXXII

. . . 'T is sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters sweep;
'T is sweet to see the evening star appear;
'T is sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 't is sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

CXXIII

'T is sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
'T is sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come;
'T is sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

CXXIV

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing: sweet are our escapes
From civic revelry to rural mirth;

Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
Sweet to the father is his first-born's birth,
Sweet is revenge — especially to women,
Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

CXXV

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who 've made 'us youth' wait too — too long already
For an estate, or cash, or country seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits.

CXXVI

'T is sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 't is sweet to put an end
To strife; 't is sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

CXXVII

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
Is first and passionate love — it stands alone,
Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd — all 's known —

And life yields nothing further to recall
  Worthy of this ambrosial sin, so shown,
No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from heaven.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO II

The Shipwreck

. . . . . .

XLIX

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went down
  Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
  Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail,
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
  And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
  With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
  If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
  And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical and half hysterical: —
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

BATHS of Caracalla at Rome.

"The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza lxxxi, p. 82.

LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost — sunk, in short.

LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell —
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

LIII

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;
And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few —
Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat.

. . . . . .

LX

'T was a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalm'd between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze:
Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damp'd,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.

LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast:
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perish'd with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be done:
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who begun
To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.

LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

. . . . . .

CII

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one by one
They perish'd, until wither'd to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.

CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare —
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

CIV

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay:
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore, — and overset her.

CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,
He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

CVII

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 't was dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half-senseless, from the sea:

CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps, in vain.

CIX

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he look'd for those
Who long had been his mates upon the sea;
But none of them appear'd to share his woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the famish'd three,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial ground.

CX

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses pass'd:
He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd hand
Droop'd dripping on the oar (their jury-mast),
And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay.

CXI

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And Time had nothing more of night nor day
For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquish'd, still retired with strife.

CXII

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
And wish'd it death in which he had reposed;
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
A lovely female face of seventeen.

CXIII

'T was bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
Seem'd almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recall'd his answering spirits back from death;
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply.

CXIV

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle flung
Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm
Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she wrung
His dewy curls, long drench'd by every storm;
And watch'd with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom — and hers, too.

CXV

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl and her attendant, — one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure, — then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair.

CXVI

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair —
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
In braids behind; and though her stature were
Even of the highest for a female mould,
They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a lady in the land.

CXVII

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'T is as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

CXVIII

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
  Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip — sweet lips! that make us sigh
  Ever to have seen such; for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
  (A race of mere impostors, when all 's done -
I 've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

CXIX

I 'll tell you why I say so, for 't is just
  One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
  I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
  Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

CXX

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
  Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;
  For, as you know, the Spanish women banish
Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave
  Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
The basquina and the mantilla, they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

CXXI

But with our damsel this was not the case:
Her dress was many-colour'd, finely spun;
Her locks curl'd negligently round her face,
But through them gold and gems profusely shone:
Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking.

CXXII

The other female's dress was not unlike,
But of inferior materials: she
Had not so many ornaments to strike,
Her hair had silver only, bound to be
Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
Was coarser; and her air, though firm, less free;
Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

CXXIII

And these two tended him, and cheer'd him both
With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
Which are (as I must own) of female growth,
And have ten thousand delicate inventions:
They made a most superior mess of broth,
A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
But the best dish that e'er was cook'd since Homer's
Achilles ordered dinner for new comers.

CXXIV

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
Of clap-trap which your recent poets prize;
And so, in short, the girls they really were
They shall appear before your curious eyes,
Mistress and maid; the first was only daughter
Of an old man who lived upon the water.

CXXV

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
And still a sort of fisherman was he;
But other speculations were, in sooth,
Added to his connection with the sea,
Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:
A little smuggling, and some piracy,
Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.

CXXVI

A fisher, therefore, was he, — though of men,
Like Peter the Apostle, — and he fish'd
For wandering merchant-vessels, now and then,
And sometimes caught as many as he wish'd;
The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
He sought in the slave-market too, and dish'd
Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

CXXVII

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
(One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
A very handsome house from out his guilt,
And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
Heaven knows what cash he got or blood he spilt,
A sad old fellow was he, if you please;
But this I know, it was a spacious building,
Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

CXXVIII

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidée,
The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;
Besides, so very beautiful was she,
Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles:
Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
Rejected several suitors, just to learn
How to accept a better in his turn.

CXXIX

And walking out upon the beach, below
The cliff, towards sunset, on that day she found,
Insensible, — not dead, but nearly so, —
Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half drown'd;
But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound,
As far as in her lay, "to take him in,
A stranger" dying, with so white a skin.

ROMAN Forum, looking toward Capitoline Hill.

" A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with Cicero ! "

—Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza cxii, p. 90.

CXXX

But taking him into her father's house
Was not exactly the best way to save,
But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
Or people in a trance into their grave;
Because the good old man had so much "νους,"
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
And sold him instantly when out of danger.

CXXXI

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
(A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
And when, at last, he open'd his black eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest;
And their compassion grew to such a size,
It open'd half the turnpike-gates to heaven
(St. Paul says, 't is the toll which must be given).

CXXXII

They made a fire, — but such a fire as they
Upon the moment could contrive with such
Materials as were cast up round the bay, —
Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch
Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay
A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnish'd twenty.

CXXXIII

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
For Haidée stripped her sables off to make
His couch; and, that he might be more at ease,
And warm, in case by chance he should awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
She and her maid — and promised by daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

CXXXIV

And thus they left him to his lone repose:
Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only knows),
Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
Not even a vision of his former woes
Throbb'd in accursèd dreams, which sometimes spread
Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.

CXXXV

Young Juan slept all dreamless: — but the maid,
Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the den
Look'd back upon him, and a moment stay'd,
And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she said
(The heart will slip, even as the tongue and pen),
He had pronounced her name — but she forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO III

The Poet

. . . . . .

LXXVIII

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it:
His verses rarely wanted their due feet;
And for his theme — he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the psalm says, "inditing a good matter."

LXXIX

He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to *no* praise —
For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

LXXX

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd — he knew the way to wheedle:

So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention —
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

LXXXI

But he had genius, — when a turncoat has it,
The "Vates irritabilis" takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare: —
But to my subject — let me see — what was it? —
Oh! — the third canto — and the pretty pair —
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,

That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

LXXXIV

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions —
Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To "do at Rome as Romans do," a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
'T was all the same to him — "God save the king,"
Or "*Ça ira*," according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six canto quarto tale;
In Spain, he 'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war — much the same in Portugal;

In Germany, the Pegasus he 'd prance on
  Would be old Goethe's (see what says De Staël);
In Italy he 'd ape the " Trecentisti " ;
In Greece, he 'd sing some sort of hymn like this t' ye:

1

The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
  Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
  Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
  The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
  Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' " Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon —
  And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
  I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
  Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
  And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!"
'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords,
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!

Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;

But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling — right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours — like the hands of dyers.

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses

Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper — even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his.

. . . . . .

XCVI

But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression —
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression;
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

XCVII

I know that what our neighbors call "*longueurs*"
(We 've not so good a *word*, but have the *thing*
In that complete perfection which ensures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 't would not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the *epopée*,
To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, "Homer sometimes sleeps";
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,—
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear "*Waggoners*," around his lakes.

VILLA Borghese, Rome.

"*A land*
Which was *the mightiest in its old command,*
And is *the loveliest, and must ever be*
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave — the lords of earth and sea."

— Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xxv, p. 65.

He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps —
Of ocean? — No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for "a little boat,"
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his "Waggon,"
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

C

"Pedlars," and "Boats," and "Waggons!"
Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss —
The "little boatman" and his "Peter Bell"
Can sneer at him who drew "Achitophel"!

CI

T' our tale.— The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;

The lady and her lover, left alone,
  The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired; —
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

THE TWILIGHT HOUR

CII

Ave Maria! blessèd be the hour!
  The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
  Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower
  Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! 't is the hour of prayer!
  Ave Maria! 't is the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
  Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
  Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove —
What though 't is but a pictured image? — strike —
That painting is no idol, — 't is too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
  In nameless print — that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
  And you shall see who has the properest notion

Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,— all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

CV

Sweet hour of twilight! — in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover,— shadow'd my mind's eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;

Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
  Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
  Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
  Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
  Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

CIX

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
  Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
  Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb:
  Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO IV

HAIDÉE AND JUAN

I

NOTHING so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

II

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man,— and, as we would hope, — perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this — the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy "falls into the yellow
Leaf," and Imagination droops her pinion,

And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'T is that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'T is that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

V

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic;

But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
  Perhaps no better than they have treated me
Who have imputed such designs as show
  Not what they saw, but what they wish'd to see:
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
  This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

VIII

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
  To their own hearts' most sweet society;
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
  With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms; he
Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
  Though foe to love; and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

IX

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
  Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
  But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail
They were all summer; lightning might assail
  And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them — they had too little clay.

X

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years — the river
Damm'd from its fountain — the child from the knee
And breast maternal wean'd at once for ever, —
Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart —

XI

The heart — which may be broken: happy they
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

XII

"Whom the gods love die young," was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead —
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn:
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard, —

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her belovèd, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloys,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

. . . . . .

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves.
More than those of nightingales or doves.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO XI

Byron and His Contemporaries

. . . . . .

LV

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing.

PORTO Venere in Gulf of Spezia,
with Church of San Pietro.

A place between two rocks beneath the church is called "Byron's Grotto," and there is a tradition that he sometimes wrote there. It may easily have been a favorite excursion in his yacht, the "Bolivar," but it is hardly likely he made a study in this often inaccessible spot.

Even I — albeit I 'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king —
Was reckon'd a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mount Saint Jean seems Cain:
"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion 's fall'n, may rise again:
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus hath a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol — by the hilts!

LVIII

Then there 's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,
Sets up for being a sort of *moral me;*
He 'll find it rather difficult some day
To turn out both, or either, it may be.

Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;
And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian "Savage Landor"
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LIX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LX

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain — or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances; they 're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

LXI

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter; —
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,

With the same feelings as you 'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I 'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXII

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks; — but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I 've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper 's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof 's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO XIV

Don Juan Described

. . . . . .

XXIX

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun* —
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX

An in-door life is less poetical;
And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,
With which I could not brew a pastoral.
But be it as it may, a bard must meet
All difficulties, whether great or small,
To spoil his undertaking or complete,
And work away like spirit upon matter,
Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

XXXI

Juan — in this respect, at least, like saints —
Was all things unto people of all sorts,
And lived contentedly, without complaints,
In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts —
Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,
And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
He likewise could be most things to all women,
Without the coxcombry of certain *she* men.

XXXII

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
'T is also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range
The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII

And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never *craned*, and made but few "*faux pas*,"
And only frètted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 't is true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting — for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several country gentlemen.

XXXIV

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
The boors cried "Dang it! who 'd have thought it?" —
Sires,
The Nestors of the sporting generation,
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV

Such were his trophies — not of spear and shield,
But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes' brushes;
Yet I must own, — although in this I yield
To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes, —
He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,
And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
Ask'd next day, "If men ever hunted *twice?*"

XXXVI

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race, —
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether saint or sinner, —
He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

XXXVII

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret — cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer; —
In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII

And then he danced; — all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime; — he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense —
A thing in footing indispensable;
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

XXXIX

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchet critic's rigour.
Such classic pas — sans flaws — set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

XL

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The "*tout ensemble*" of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prosers, words are void of colour.

XLI

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.

. . . . . .

FROM "DON JUAN," CANTO XVI

Conventional Society

. . . . . .

XCVI

. . . Juan, when he cast a glance
On Adeline while playing her grand role,
Which she went through as though it were a dance,
Betraying only now and then her soul
By a look scarce perceptibly askance
(Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
Some doubt how much of Adeline was *real;*

XCVII

So well she acted all and every part
By turns — with that vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err — 't is merely what is call'd mobility,
A thing of temperament and not of art,
Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false — though true; for surely they 're sincerest
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.

XCVIII

This makes your actors, artists, and romancers,
Heroes sometimes, though seldom — sages never;
But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers,
Little that 's great, but much of what is clever;
Most orators, but very few financiers,
Though all Exchequer chancellors endeavour,

"AURORA," by Guido Reni, in Palazzo Rospigliosi at Rome.

"Like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome." — Don Juan, Canto XIV, stanza xl, p. 303.

Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,
And grow quite figurative with their figures.

XCIX

The poets of arithmetic are they
Who, though they prove not two and two to be
Five, as they might do in a modest way,
Have plainly made it out that four are three,
Judging by what they take, and what they pay.
The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

C

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,
The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much at ease;
Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,
Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize
The ridicules of people in all places —
That honey of your fashionable bees —
And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;
And this at present was her kind employment.

CI

However, the day closed, as days must close;
The evening also waned — and coffee came.
Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose,
And curtsying off, as curtsies country dame,
Retired: with most unfashionable bows
Their docile esquires also did the same,

Delighted with their dinner and their host,
But with the Lady Adeline the most.

CII

Some praised her beauty; others her great grace;
The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity
Was obvious in each feature of her face,
Whose traits were radiant with the rays of verity.
Yes; *she* was truly worthy *her* high place!
No one could envy her deserved prosperity.
And then her dress — what beautiful simplicity
Draperied her form with curious felicity!

CIII

Meanwhile sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
By an impartial indemnification
For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
In a most edifying conversation,
Which turn'd upon their late guests' miens and faces,
And families, even to the last relation;
Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
And truculent distortion of their tresses.

CIV

True, *she* said little — 't was the rest that broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 't was to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's "faint praise," so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.
How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
I ask but this of mine, to — *not* defend.

TO JOHN MURRAY[1]

GENOA, 10bre 25, 1822.

I HAD sent you back the *Quarterly*, without perusal, having resolved to read no more reviews, good, bad, or indifferent; but "who can control his fate?" Galignani, to whom my English studies are confined, has forwarded a copy of at least one-half of it, in his indefatigable Catch-penny weekly compilation; and as, "like Honour, it came unlooked for," I have looked through it. I must say that, upon the *whole*, that is, the whole of the *half* which I have read (for the other half is to be the Segment of Gal.'s next week's Circular), it is extremely handsome, and anything but unkind or unfair.[2] As I take the good in good part, I must not, nor will not, quarrel with the bad: what the Writer says of *Don Juan* is harsh, but it is inevitable. He must follow, or at least not directly oppose, the opinion of a prevailing, and yet not very firmly

[1] Murray being no longer Byron's publisher, this is the last letter written to him during Byron's residence in Italy. His correspondence from Greece also was mainly with other friends or with business agents.

[2] The review of Byron's Dramas was written by Bishop Heber — "Even the Mystery of Cain, wicked as it may be, is the work of a nobler and more daring wickedness than that which delights in insulting the miseries, and stimulating the evil passions, and casting a cold-blooded ridicule over all the lofty and generous feelings of our nature; and it is better that Lord Byron should be a manichee, or a deist,— nay, we would almost say, if the thing were possible, it is better that he should be a moral and argumentative atheist, than the professed and systematic poet of seduction, adultery, and incest: the contemner of patriotism, the insulter of piety, the raker into every sink of vice and wretchedness to disgust and degrade and harden the hearts of his fellow-creatures." —*Quarterly Review*, vol. xxvii. p. 477.

seated, party: a review may and will direct and "turn awry" the Currents of opinion, but it must not directly oppose them. *Don Juan* will be known by and bye, for what it is intended,— a *Satire* on *abuses* of the present states of Society, and not an eulogy of vice: it may be now and then voluptuous: I can't help that. Ariosto is worse; Smollett (see Lord Strutwell in vol. 2[d]. of *R*[*oderick*] *R*[*andom*]) ten times worse; and Fielding no better. No Girl will ever be seduced by reading *D. J.*:— no, no; she will go to Little's poems and Rousseau's romans for that, or even to the immaculate De Staël: they will encourage her, and not the Don, who laughs at that, and — and — most other things. But never mind — *Ça ira!*

And now to a less agreeable topic, of which *pars magna es* — you Murray of Albemarle S[t] and the other Murray of Bridge Street — "Arcades Ambo" ("*Murrays both*") "et *cant*-are pares": ye, I say, between you, are the Causes of the prosecution of John Hunt, Esqre on account of the *Vision*.[1] You, by sending him an incorrect copy, and the other, by his function. Egad, but H.'s Counsel will lay it on you with a trowel for your tergiversifying as to the MSS., etc., whereby poor H. (and, for anything I know, myself — I am willing enough) is likely to be impounded.

Now, do you see what you and your friends do by your injudicious rudeness? — actually cement a sort of

[1] John Hunt, prosecuted and convicted for publishing *The Vision of Judgment*, was ordered to pay a fine of £100 and to find sureties, and, in default, to be imprisoned in the custody of the Marshal of the Marshalsea. The fine was paid, and the sureties provided.

connection which you strove to prevent, and which, had the H.'s *prospered,* would not in all probability have continued. As it is, I will not quit them in their adversity, though it should cost me character, fame, money, and the usual *et cetera.*

My original motives I already explained (in the letter which you thought proper to show): they are the *true* ones, and I abide by them, as I tell you, and I told L^d. H^t. when he questioned me on the subject of that letter. He was violently hurt, and never will forgive me at bottom; but I can't help that. I never meant to make a parade of it; but if he chose to question me, I could only answer the plain truth: and I confess I did not see anything in the letter to hurt him, unless I said he was a "*bore,*" which I don't remember. Had their Journal[1] gone on well, and I could have aided to make it better for them, I should then have left them, after my safe pilotage off a lee shore, to make a prosperous voyage by themselves. As it is, I can't, and would not, if I could, leave them amidst the breakers.

As to any community of feeling, thought, or opinion, between L. H. and me, there is little or none: we meet rarely, hardly ever; but I think him a good-principled and able man, and must do as I would be done by. I do not know what world he has lived in, but I have lived in three or four; and none of them like his Keats and Kangaroo *terra incognita.* Alas! poor Shelley! how

[1] *The Liberal,* fostered by Byron and Shelley, edited by Leigh Hunt, and published by John Hunt, was abandoned after the publication of four numbers.

we would have laughed had he lived, and how we used to laugh now and then, at various things which are grave in the Suburbs!

You are all mistaken about Shelley. You do not know how mild, how tolerant, how good he was in Society; and as perfect a Gentleman as ever crossed a drawing-room, when he liked, and where he liked.

I have some thoughts of taking a run down to Naples (*solus*, or, at most, *cum solâ*) this spring, and writing, when I have studied the Country, a fifth and sixth Canto of *Ch*: *Harolde:* but this is merely an idea for the present, and I have other excursions and voyages in my mind. The busts are finished: are you worthy of them?

Yours, etc.,

N. B.

P. S.—Mrs. Shelley is residing with the Hunts at some distance from me: I see them very seldom, and generally on account of their business. Mrs. S., I believe, will go to England in the Spring.[1]

Count Gamba's family, the father and Son and daughter, are residing with me by Mr. Hill's[2] (the minister's) recommendation, as a safer asylum from the political persecutions than they could have in another residence; but they occupy one part of a large house, and I the other, and our establishments are quite separate.

Since I have read the *Q*[*uarterly*], I shall erase two or three passages in the latter 6 or 7 Cantos, in which I had

[1] Mrs. Shelley left Genoa for London, July 25, 1823.

[2] William Noel-Hill (1773-1842), British Envoy to the Court of Sardinia (1807-24).

lightly stroked over two or three of your authors; but I will not return evil for good. I liked what I read of the article much.

Mr. J. Hunt is most likely the publisher of the new Cantos; with what prospects of success I know not, nor does it very much matter, as far as I am concerned; but I hope that it may be of use to him, for he is a stiff sturdy, conscientious man, and I like him: he is such a one as Prynne or Pym might be. I bear you no ill will for declining the *D. J's.*, but I cannot commend your conduct to the H.'s. . . .

TO JOHN HUNT

GENOA, Mch. 10th, 1823.

SIR, — I do not know what Mr. Kinnaird intended by desiring the stoppage of *The Liberal*, which is no more in his power than in mine. The utmost that Mr. K. (who must have misunderstood me) should have done, was to state, what I mentioned to your brother, that, my assistance neither appearing essential to the publication nor advantageous to you or your brother, and at the same time exciting great disapprobation amongst my friends and connections in England, I craved permission to withdraw. What is stranger is that Mr. Kd. *could* not have received my letter to this effect till long after the date of your letter to your brother this day received. The *Pulci* is at your service for the third number, if you think it worth the insertion. With regard to other publications, I know not what to think or to say; for the work, even

by your own account, is unsuccessful, and I am not at all sure that this failure does not spring much more from *me* than any other connection of the work. I am at this moment the most unpopular man in England, and if a whistle would call me to the pinnacle of English fame, I would not utter it. All this, however, is no reason why I should involve others in similar odium, and I have some reason to believe that *The Liberal* would have more success without my intervention. However this may be, I am willing to do anything I can for your brother or any member of his family, and have the honour to be

Your very obed^{t}. humble st.

N. B.

P. S. — I have to add that no secession will take place on my part from *The Liberal* without serious consideration with your brother. The poems which I have desired to be published separately, required this for obvious reasons of the subject, etc., and also that their publication should be immediate.

TO JOHN HUNT

GENOA, Mch. 17th 1823.

SIR, — Your brother will have forwarded by the post a corrected proof of *The Blues* for some ensuing number of the Journal; but I should think that ye Pulci translation had better be preferred for the immediate number, as *The Blues* will only tend further to indispose a portion of your readers.

I still retain my opinion that my connection with the

SEA-COAST near Byron's house at Albaro.

work will tend to anything but its success. Such I thought from the first, when I suggested that it would have been better to have made a kind of literary appendix to the *Examiner;* the other expedient was hazardous, and has failed hitherto accordingly; and it appears that the two pieces of my contribution have precipitated that failure more than any other. It was a pity to print such a quantity, especially as you might have been aware of my general unpopularity, and the universal run of the period against my productions, since the publication of Mr. Murray's last volume. My talent (if I have any) does not lie in the kinds of composition which is (*sic*) most acceptable to periodical readers. By this time you are probably convinced of this fact. The Journal, if continued (as I see no reason why it should not be), will find much more efficacious assistance in the present and other contributors than in myself. Perhaps also, you should, for the present, reduce the number printed to two thousand, and raise it gradually if necessary. It is not so much against *you* as against me that the hatred is directed; and, I confess, I would rather withstand it *alone*, and grapple with it as I may. Mr. Murray, partly from pique, for he is a Mortal — mortal as his publications, though a bookseller — has done more harm than you are fully aware of, or I either; and you will perceive this probably on my first separate publication, no less than in those connected with *The Liberal.* He has the Clergy, and the Government, and the public with him; I do not much embarrass myself about them when *alone;* but I do not wish to drag others down also. I take this to be the

fact, for I do not recollect that so much odium was directed against your family and friends, till your brother, unfortunately for himself, came in literary contact with myself. I will not, however, quit *The Liberal* without mature consideration, though I feel persuaded that it would be for your advantage that I should do so. Time and Truth may probably do away this hostility, or, at least, its effect; but, in the interim, you are the sufferer. Every publication of mine has latterly failed; I am not discouraged by this, because writing and composition are habits of my mind, with which Success and Publication are objects of remoter reference — *not causes* but *effects*, like those of any other pursuit. I have had enough both of praise and abuse to deprive them of their novelty, but I continue to compose for the same reason that I ride, or read, or bathe, or travel — it is a habit.

I want sadly *Peveril of the Peak*, which has not yet arrived here, and I will thank you much for a copy; I shall direct Mr. Kinnaird to reimburse you for the price. It will be useless to forward *The Liberal*, the insertion of which will only prevent the arrival of any other books in the same parcel. That work is strictly prohibited, and the packet which came by sea was extracted with the greatest difficulty. Never send by sea, it is a loss of four months; by land, a fortnight is sufficient.

Yours ever,

N. B.

TO MRS. [? SHELLEY]

[Undated.]

. . . . . .

I presume that you, at least, know enough of me to be sure that I could have no intention to insult Hunt's poverty. On the contrary, I honour him for it; for I know what it is, having been as much embarrassed as ever he was, without perceiving aught in it to diminish an honourable man's self-respect. If you mean to say that, had he been a wealthy man, I would have joined in this Journal, I answer in the negative. . . . I engaged in the Journal from good-will towards him, added to respect for his character, literary and personal; and no less for his political courage, as well as regret for his present circumstances: I did this in the hope that he might, with the same aid from literary friends of literary contributions (which is requisite for all journals of a mixed nature), render himself independent.

. . . . . .

I have always treated him, in our personal intercourse, with such scrupulous delicacy, that I have forborne intruding advice which I thought might be disagreeable, lest he should impute it to what is called "taking advantage of a man's situation."

As to friendship, it is a propensity in which my genius is very limited. I do not know the *male* human being, except Lord Clare, the friend of my infancy, for whom I feel any thing that deserves the name. All my others are men-of-the-world friendships. I did not even feel it

for Shelley, however much I admired and esteemed him; so that you see not even vanity could bribe me into it, for, of all men, Shelley thought highest of my talents, — and, perhaps, of my disposition.

I will do my duty by my intimates, upon the principle of doing as you would be done by. I have done so, I trust, in most instances. I may be pleased with their conversation — rejoice in their success — be glad to do them service, or to receive their counsel and assistance in return. But as for friends and friendship, I have (as I already said) named the only remaining male for whom I feel any thing of the kind, excepting, perhaps, Thomas Moore. I have had, and may have still, a thousand friends, as they are called, in *life*, who are like one's partners in the waltz of this world — not much remembered when the ball is over, though very pleasant for the time. Habit, business, and companionship in pleasure or in pain, are links of a similar kind, and the same faith in politics is another. . . .

TO J. J. COULMANN[1]

GENOA, July 12 (?), 1823.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your letter, and what accompanied it, have given me the greatest pleasure. The glory and the works of the writers who have deigned to give me these volumes, bearing their names, were not unknown to me, but still it is more flattering to receive them from the

[1] A French writer who had sought and received an interview with Byron a few months earlier.

authors themselves. I beg you to present my thanks to each of them in particular; and to add, how proud I am of their good opinion, and how charmed I shall be to cultivate their acquaintance, if ever the occasion should occur. The productions of M. Jouy have long been familiar to me. Who has not read and applauded *The Hermit* and *Scylla?* But I cannot accept what it has pleased your friends to call their *homage*, because there is no sovereign in the republic of letters; and even if there were, I have never had the pretension or the power to become a usurper.

I have also to return you thanks for having honoured me with your own compositions; I thought you too young, and probably too amiable, to be an author. As to the Essay, etc., I am obliged to you for the present, although I had already seen it joined to the last edition of the translation.[1] I have nothing to object to it, with regard to what concerns myself personally, though naturally there are some of the facts in it discoloured, and several errors into which the author has been led by the accounts of others. I allude to facts, and not criticisms. But the same author has cruelly calumniated my father and my grand-uncle, but more especially the former. So far from being "brutal," he was, according to the testimony of all those who knew him, of an extremely amiable and (*enjoué*) joyous character, but careless (*insouciant*) and dissipated. He had, consequently, the reputation of a good officer, and showed himself such in the Guards, in

[1] The "Essai" speaking of Captain Byron and Lady Carmarthen, says, "Les vices du capitaine et sa brutalité la firent mourir de douleur."

America. The facts themselves refute the assertion. It is not by "brutality" that a young Officer in the Guards seduces and carries off a Marchioness, and marries two heiresses. It is true that he was a very handsome man, which goes a great way. His first wife (Lady Conyers and Marchioness of Carmarthen) did not die of grief, but of a malady which she caught by having imprudently insisted upon accompanying my father to a hunt, before she was completely recovered from the accouchement which gave birth to my sister Augusta.

His second wife, my respected mother, had, I assure you, too proud a spirit to bear the ill-usage of any man, no matter who he might be; and this she would have soon proved. I should add, that he lived a long time in Paris, and was in habits of intimacy with the old Marshal Biron, Commandant of the French Guards; who, from the similitude of names, and Norman origin of our family, supposed that there was some distant relationship between us. He died some years before the age of forty, and whatever may have been his faults, they were certainly not those of harshness and grossness (*dureté et grossièreté*). If the notice should reach England, I am certain that the passage relative to my father will give much more pain to my sister (the wife of Colonel Leigh, attached to the Court of the late Queen, *not* Caroline, but Charlotte, wife of George III.), even than to me; and this she does not deserve, for there is not a more angelic being upon earth. Augusta and I have always loved the memory of our father as much as we loved each other, and this at least forms a presumption that the stain of harshness was not

applicable to it. If he dissipated his fortune, that concerns us alone, for we are his heirs; and till we reproach him with it, I know no one else who has a right to do so. As to Lord Byron, who killed Mr. Chaworth in a duel, so far from retiring from the world, he made the tour of Europe, and was appointed Master of the Staghounds after that event, and did not give up society until his son had offended him by marrying in a manner contrary to his duty. So far from feeling any remorse for having killed Mr. Chaworth, who was a fire-eater (*spadassin*), and celebrated for his quarrelsome disposition, he always kept the sword which he used upon that occasion in his bed-chamber, where it still was *when he died.* It is singular enough, that when very young, I formed a strong attachment for the grand-niece and heiress of Mr. Chaworth, who stood in the same degree of relationship as myself to Lord Byron; and at one time it was thought that the two families would have been united in us. She was two years older than me, and we were very much together in our youth. She married a man of an ancient and respectable family; but her marriage was not a happier one than my own. Her conduct, however, was irreproachable, but there was no sympathy between their characters, and a separation took place. I had not seen her for many years. When an occasion offered, I was upon the point, with her consent, of paying her a visit, when my sister, who has always had more influence over me than anyone else, persuaded me not to do it. "For," said she, "if you go, you will fall in love again, and then there will be a scene; one step will lead to another, *et cela fera un éclat,*"

etc. I was guided by these reasons, and shortly after I married; with what success it is useless to say. Mrs. C. some time after, being separated from her husband, became insane; but she has since recovered her reason, and is, I believe, reconciled to her husband. This is a long letter, and principally about my family, but it is the fault of M. Pichot, my benevolent biographer. He may say of me whatever of good or evil pleases him, but I desire that he should speak of my relations only as they deserve. If you could find an occasion of making him, as well as M. Nodier, rectify the facts relative to my father, and publish them, you would do me a great service, for I cannot bear to have him unjustly spoken of. I must conclude abruptly, for I have occupied you too long. Believe me to be very much honoured by your esteem, and always your obliged and obedient servant,

NOEL BYRON.

P. S. — The tenth or twelfth of this month I shall embark for Greece. Should I return, I shall pass through Paris, and shall be much flattered in meeting you and your friends. Should I not return, give me as affectionate a place in your memory as possible.

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Edited by ANNA BENNESON McMAHAN

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